Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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Kayla Igitol is new CEC executive director. PAGE 3
CNMI positive cases now at 134. PAGE 4

PIKA FESTIVAL
Hundreds attend the first big event hosted by the Marianas Visitors Authority–the 17th annual, weekend-long, Tinian Hot Pepper "Pika" Festival, last Feb. 13.
Story on Page 4

JUSTINE NAUTA

Extreme weather in CNMI

Hotter weather, stronger typhoons, coral reef death, and physical and mental health risks are among the major challenges detailed in a new report on climate change in the CNMI.

See EXTREME on **Page 4**

GAO: AS OF OCTOBER 2020

FEMA obligated $877M for 2018 disasters

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

» Yet only 30% of homes completed in CNMI

As of October 2020, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has obligated $877 million—more than 70% for individual and public assistance missions—following the 2018 natural disasters in the CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii, yet it has not fully addressed housing assistance issues in the CNMI, ac-

See FEMA on **Page 4**

GCEA seeks repeal of touchback rule

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Governor's Council of Economic Advisors is exploring the possibility of having the "touchback" rule of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service repealed.

See GCEA on **Page 4**

Trump acquitted, denounced in historic impeachment trial

By LISA MASCARO, ERIC TUCKER, and MARY CLARE JALONICK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Donald Trump was acquitted Saturday of inciting the horrific attack on the U.S. Capitol, concluding a historic impeachment trial that spared him the first-ever conviction of a current or former U.S. president but exposed the fragility of America's democratic traditions and left a divided nation to come to terms with the violence sparked by his defeated presidency.

Barely a month since the deadly Jan. 6 riot that stunned the world, the Senate convened for a rare weekend session to deliver its verdict, voting while armed National Guard troops continued to stand their posts outside the iconic building.

The quick trial, the nation's first of a former president, showed in raw and emotional de-

See TRUMP on **Page 4**

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 14, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,683	9	7,692
Recovered	7,460	12	7,472
Active	81	9	90
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			121,094

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	1	134
Traced via Travel Screening	107	1	108
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			179

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

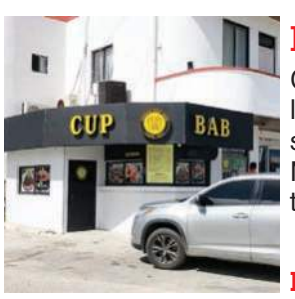
COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
Red: Least safe
Orange
Yellow
Blue
Green: Safest

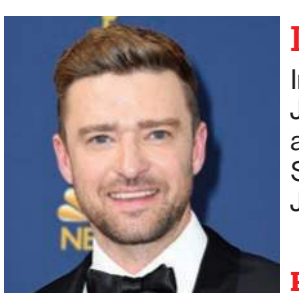
Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

LOCAL
A 30-year-old museum called Ancient Chamoru Rota Cave Museum reopens by appointment.
PAGE 2



BUSINESS
Cup BAB in San Jose, located on the left side of the San Jose Mart, will be opening today.
PAGE 11



LIFE & STYLE
In a social media post, Justin Timberlake apologizes to Britney Spears and Janet Jackson.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Court issues default judgment vs IPI in law firm's suit

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for NMI has issued a default judgment in favor of law firm Banes Horey Berman & Miller, which is suing Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for breach of contract.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has ordered IPI to pay the law firm $113,333.30 plus 9% per annum in prejudgment interest beginning on Jan. 6, 2021.

Manglona said that IPI has to date failed to respond to the law firm's motion for entry of default. IPI's response was due last Jan. 25, 2021, if it wanted to contest that it was in default or to contest the balance owed.

"Given IPI's failure to file any opposition contesting the law firm's motion, the court grants the motion for entry of default," she said.

In her order, the judge noted that the law firm earlier asked the court to stay proceedings in the case for six months pending execution of the parties' settlement agreement. The judge granted the stay.

On Jan. 7, 2021, the law firm had the stay lifted and asked for a default judgment against IPI for its failure to pay the second installment pursuant to the parties' settlement agreement.

According to the settlement agreement, IPI was to pay a total of $100,000 in consideration of the law firm's releasing and waiving IPI from further claims arising out of the nonpayment of legal fees and costs as alleged in the complaint.

IPI was supposed to pay those amounts in six installment of $16,666.66 except for the first installment amount being $16,666.70 that was due by Dec. 7, 2020.

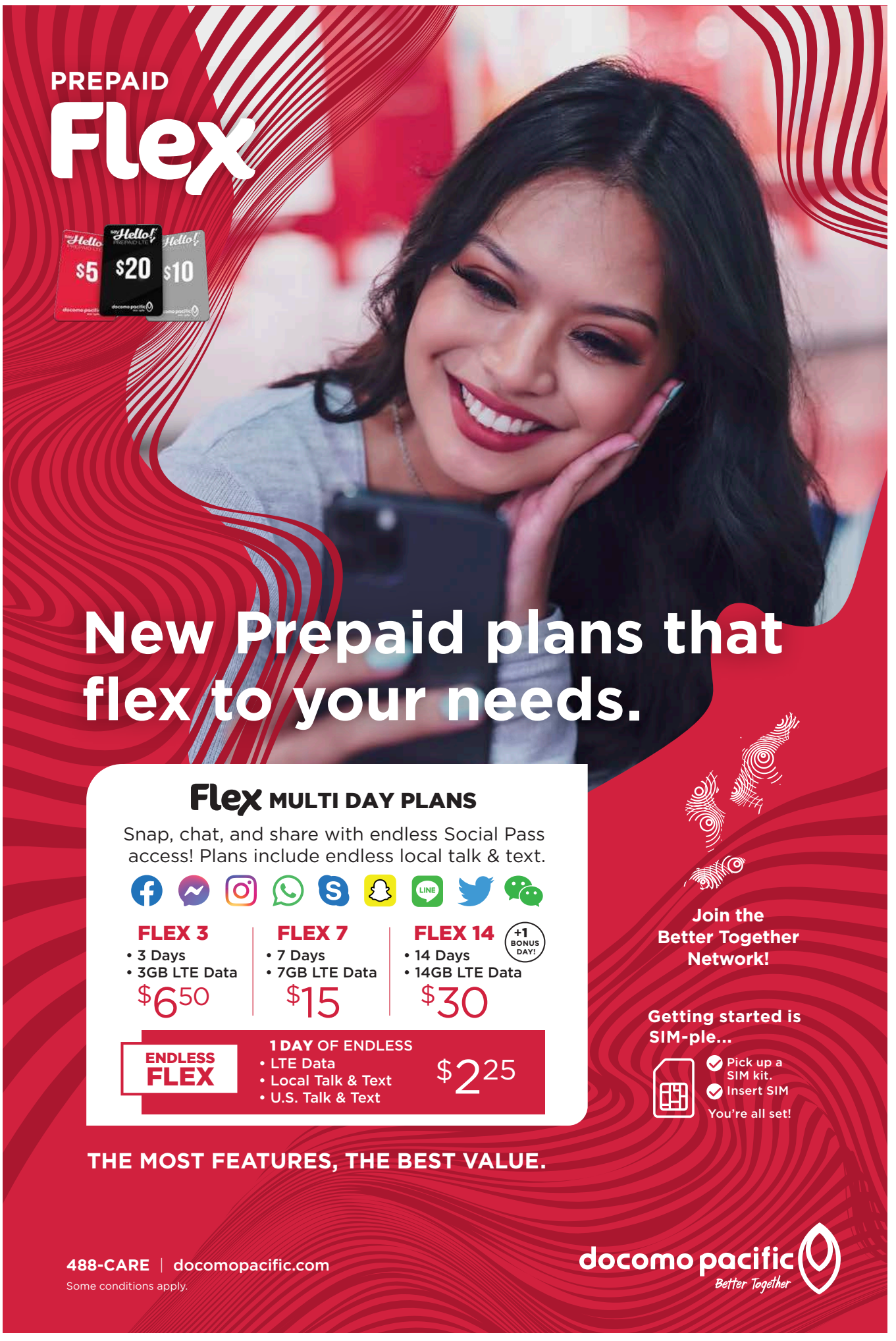
IPI's failure to pay or deliver the full amount of any installment on or before its due date would constitute a default on the agreement and would entitle the law firm to entry of default judgment in the higher amount of $130,000, minus the sum of prior installments that were fully paid on time.

A day after IPI failed to make the second payment on the due date, the law firm asked the court to lift the stay and enter a default judgment against IPI.

Manglona lifted the stay on Jan. 8, and ordered the law firm to serve both its motion and the court order on IPI.

The law firm then filed proof that IPI accounting director Frances Mafnas was personally served on Jan. 11, 2021.

According to court documents, back in Sept. 10, 2020, the law firm sued IPI for breach of implied contract, and unjust enrichment. IPI owed the law firm at least $120,000 for legal services.



Rota Cave Museum now open by appointment

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

ROTA—Established in 1990, a 30-year-old museum called Ancient Chamoru Rota Cave Museum is worth the visit when you are on Rota. In compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, though, the museum is only open to visitors by appointment.

The cave itself that is the star attraction of the museum is said to be approximately 11 million years old.

In an interview with one of the owners, Mercedes Taisacan, she said she and her husband, Matias Taisacan, opened the museum in 1990 when he inherited the land, together with the cave, from his father. She added that a clamshell imprint in the cave was able to tell archaeologists how old the cave is.

"I spotted it five years after we opened the museum. It's a clamshell form, like spondylus, and the archaeologists that were savaging the *Santa Margarita*…were the ones who told me the estimated age of the cave," said Mercedes. The *Santa Margarita* was a sunken galleon off the coast of Rota that was salvaged by archeologists in the 2000s.

According to her, the museum was closed for a while due to unforeseen family circumstances. Mercedes, who recently returned from the U.S. mainland, said they aren't able to open the museum right now as the COVID-19 pandemic means they have no regular visitors. Mercedes told *Saipan Tribune* that she will only open to those who contact her at 488-0235.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Mercedes only charged guests $5, but now they are charging $10. Mercedes said that the museum actually has more collectibles that cannot be showcased because there are no spaces for them. "We don't have space to put it in the showcase, so we need more showcases in order for us to take it out, and display that," said Mercedes.

Throughout the tour, Mercedes showed *Saipan Tribune* Japanese cooking bowls dating back from World War II. She said that the cave was a hideout for not only Japanese, but Chamorros as well, just not at the same time. While hiding out, the Japanese would use these bowls to cook food like rice, meat, and many more.

Another perk that comes with the $10 entrance fee is that Mercedes has studied everything in the cave from the collectibles, to the dirt of the cave, providing a thorough tour with historical facts.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Free swim classes for women in Feb., March

500 Sails is offering free swim classes for women and teenage girls through their Sirena Project. The classes will be held on Sundays through February and March, from 11am to noon, at the Guma Sakman. All levels are welcome. Bring a water bottle, swim clothes, a towel, and a friend.

For more information: email info@500sails.org, follow 500 Sails at https://www.facebook.com/500SailsDolphinClubSaipan, or call Emma Perez at 670-285-4268. ***(PR)***

5.0-magnitude quake in Guam

At 2:02pm on Feb. 13, 2021, a report of a 5.0-magnitude earthquake occurred at 190 kilometers south-southwest of Merizo Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

Kilili: Furloughed employees could get jobs back if Biden enacts $515M plan

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP) said over the weekend that furloughed CNMI government employees could get their jobs back if President Joseph Biden Jr. enacts the Democratic Party's proposal to provide the Marianas $515 million to make up for lost government revenue.

Sablan stated in his e-kilili newsletter that the proposal is part of the Biden administration's American Rescue Plan, which is now going through the committee approval process in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The Committee on Oversight and Government Operations was marking up its piece of the rescue plan, containing the Marianas money in a Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund, as we went to press," he said.

The delegate said former President Donald J. Trump and Senate Republicans blocked this direct aid for state and territory governments in the December relief package, Public Law 116-260.

He said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi plans to have the House send the completed American Rescue Plan bill to the Senate by the end of the month.

Sablan said the goal is to have Biden sign it into law before the current round of unemployment assistance expires on March 14, 2021.

Last Tuesday, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres informed the Legislature that he and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios are making a very difficult decision to initiate reduction-in-force procedures involving 180 government employees that are currently on furlough as part of ongoing cost-containment measures to ensure the continuity of public services. "I have no choice when we don't have any tourism and revenue," Torres said.

In his letter to Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez, Torres said it would require $5,688,239 to fully fund the 180 positions. This, Torres said, is in addition to the 3% shortfall in anticipated revenue incurred during the first quarter of fiscal year 2021.

He said he and Palacios are making the decision after consulting with the Civil Service Commission, the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Commonwealth's executive department heads. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Kayla Igitol is new CEC executive director

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission board voted last Friday to appoint CEC administrative officer Kayla Igitol as the new CEC executive director.

Igitol

Igitol, who has been in the CEC for almost 13 years now, acknowledges that she faces a lot of challenges in upcoming elections but she assured that will be up to the challenge, her main goal being to restore the public's trust in the election process and to make sure that toy keep the elections fair and secure.

In an interview after the board meeting, the 37-year-old Igitol said it's a very challenging job and that she's very appreciative to the commissioners that they considered her for this position.

As for her message to the CEC staff, Igitol said she can't do everything alone. "I need them. We need to work together and they're very supportive. I enjoy working with my staff. They are just like family to me," she said. Igitol said the CEC staff fully support her and that she also does the same way for them. "And I know we can overcome any challenges we face and any future elections," said Igitol, who has been at CEC in 10 elections.

CEC board chair Jesus Sablan presided over the meeting held at CEC's conference room in Susupe. Only vice chair Dorris Aldan Atalig was not present.

The other commissioners present were Henry Kaipat, John Attao, Esther Yatar, Leilani Manglona, and Vicente Borja.

It was Yatar who moved for Igitol's appointment. Manglona seconded the motion. All six commissioners present voted "yes" for Igitol's appointment.

Igitol rose from the ranks. She started as a temporary employee for six months, then got extended, and became an election register clerk. She then became an administrative officer.

When then-executive director Julita A. Villagomez retired last Dec. 30, Igitol became the acting executive director.

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CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE

Before you register for vaccination, take our survey!
https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/covid-19/survey/

WHO CAN REGISTER?

PHASE 1a
- Healthcare workers, high-risk first responders, homebound /bedbound patients, & Man Amko' (≥65 years).

PHASE 1b
- Persons 55 years of age and older.
- Workers part of CNMI infrastructure visit vaccinatecnmi.com for a list!

We are here
NO VACCINE
LIMITED SUPPLY PHASE 1
ADDITIONAL SUPPLY PHASE 2
BROAD SUPPLY PHASE 3

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION?

- Register **ONLINE** at **www.vaccinatecnmi.com**
- Register over the **PHONE** by calling **(670) 682-SHOT**/(7468)

CNMI COVID-19 VACCINATION SCHEDULE

2/15/2021-2/20/2021

SAIPAN

Monday 2/15 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/25

Tuesday 2/16 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/26

Wednesday 2/17 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/27

Thursday 2/18 - 8am to 6pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/28

Friday 2/19 - 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 1/29

Saturday 2/20 - 8am to 1pm
- Dose 2: For those vaccinated on 01/30

NO VACCINATIONS ON SAIPAN FOR SUNDAY, 2/20

LOCATION: CHCC - MCATS tents located across from the Emergency Room.
PARKING: Parking lot is located across the CHCC campus on Navy Hill Road.

*Dose 1 vaccinations are based on availability and depends upon verification of phase status by CHCC. Go online to register at **vaccinatecnmi.com** or call the Vaccinate CNMI Call Center at **(670) 683-SHOT**/7468 to secure a vaccination spot.*

TINIAN

Monday 2/15 - 9am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 55+

Saturday 2/20 - 9am to 3pm
Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 55+

REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/14 & 2/19 at 7pm

LOCATION: Tinian Health Center

ROTA

Saturday 2/20 - 8am to 3pm
- Dose 1: Available for Phase 1a & 1b

REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE 2/19 at 7pm

LOCATION: Rota Health Center

What to Bring

1. **Vaccination ID** (Located in confirmation email)
2. **Government Issued ID** (e.g, driver's license or passport)
3. **Employee ID** or latest paystub (Phase 1b only)
4. **Insurance Card** (If applicable)
5. DOSE 2 recipients must also bring their **Vaccination Record Card** (please make your appointment date even if you misplace your card)

*VACCINATE CNMI CALL CENTER: **(670) 682-SHOT** / Mon-Sat 8am-8pm & Sunday 8am-1:30pm* *VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE:* **vaccinatecnmi.com** **@cnmichcc**

‘Pika Fest is pilot for future events’

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

TINIAN—With COVID-19 precautions in place, the Marianas Visitors Authority was able to push forward with Tinian’s annual, weekend-long Pika Festival from Feb. 13 to Feb. 14.

In an interview with MVA managing director Priscilla Iakopo, she said that MVA was able to host the annual Pika Festival because of the cooperation and compliance of the community. That success means the festival is being looked at as a pilot model for upcoming MVA events throughout the year.

Iakopo said Pika Fest came about because of much consideration from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and the COVID-19 Task Force implementing safety measures and the community being in compliance with all precautions.

MVA set up a barricade around the Pika Festival grounds, and Iakopo said that it was to control who is going in and out of the event. “We’ve actually barricaded the area, so that way we can monitor and control the entry and the exit, and then we also have everybody wearing masks and having these wristbands to identify that they’ve actually checked in with MVA and their temperatures have been checked as well,” said Iakopo.

When asked if Saipan will see future signature events such as the Flame Tree Arts Festival, Taste of the Marianas, etc., Iakopo said that after the festival is done, MVA will have a meeting with CHCC and the COVID-19 Task Force to “see if there were any gaps that we might have to tighten or we missed anything,” which MVA will correct for future events.

More than 15 vendors were present at the festival. *Saipan Tribune* learned that all the booths had to submit guidelines to the task force, go through a sanitation process under the guidance of with the Bureau of Environmental Health, and submit documents to MVA, which is how they were able to be a vendor for the Pika Festival.

Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan said he understands that people might be nervous or even cautious, but it is important to “get back some sense of normalcy.”

“I understand that some people may be nervous and even more cautious that we are celebrating this year’s Pika Fest on a large scale compared to what we were used to this past year with less than 20 people in an area but I want you to understand how important it is for us to get back some sense of normalcy in our community because our economy and livelihood depend on it,” said Aldan.

Aldan reassured the community that MVA, the mayor’s office, and the task force have been working side-by-side when they made the decision to celebrate this year’s festival. He also assured that they will be following social distancing precautions under Gov. Ralph DLG Torres’ executive order to keep everyone safe throughout the weekend.

CNMI positive cases now at 134

One more individual—an incoming traveler—has been confirmed positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI. This brings the CNMI’s total to 134 cases since March 28, 2020.

The individual was identified by travel screening and confirmed diagnosis through testing upon arrival.

The individual has been safely in quarantine and was moved to the designated isolation area for monitoring.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the new confirmed case, including passengers on the same flight. ***(PR)***

TRUMP

From Page 1

tail how perilously close the invaders had come to destroying the nation’s deep tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power after Trump had refused to concede the election. Rallying outside the White House, he unleashed a mob of supporters to “fight like hell” for him at the Capitol just as Congress was certifying Democrat Joe Biden’s victory. As hundreds stormed the building, some in tactical gear engaging in bloody combat with police, lawmakers fled for their lives. Five people died.

The verdict, on a vote of 57-43, is all but certain to influence not only the former president’s political future but that of the senators sworn to deliver impartial justice as jurors. Seven Republicans joined all Democrats to convict, but it was far from the two-third threshold required.

The outcome after the uprising leaves unresolved the nation’s wrenching divisions over Trump’s brand of politics that led to the most violent domestic attack on one of America’s three branches of government.

“Senators, we are in a dialogue with history, a conversation with our past, with a hope for our future,” said Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa.., one of the House prosecutors in closing arguments.

“What we do here, what is being asked of each of us here, in this moment, will be remembered.”

Trump, unrepentant, welcomed his second impeachment acquittal and said his movement “has only just begun.” He slammed the trial as “yet another phase of the greatest witch hunt in the history of our Country.”

Though he was acquitted of the sole charge of incitement of insurrection, it was easily the largest number of senators to ever vote to find a president of their own party guilty of an impeachment count of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Voting to find Trump guilty were GOP Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania.

Even after voting to acquit, the Republican leader Mitch McConnell condemned the former president as “practically and morally responsible” for the insurrection. McConnell contended Trump could not be convicted because he was gone from the White House.

In a statement issued several hours after the verdict, Biden highlighted the bipartisan nature of the vote to convict as well as McConnell’s strong criticism of Trump. In keeping with his stated desire to see the country overcome its divisions, Biden said everyone, especially the nation’s leaders, have a duty “to defend the truth and to defeat the lies.”

FEMA

From Page 1

cording to a new report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

For example, FEMA experienced delays implementing its Permanent Housing Construction program in the CNMI due to contracting shortfalls and lack of experienced staff. As of October 2020, only about 30% of homes were completed and returned to survivors. GAO found that these housing assistance challenges are consistent with lessons learned from prior FEMA missions in other remote areas of the U.S. The GAO report said that developing guidance that addresses lessons learned in the Permanent Housing Construction program could help streamline assistance to disaster survivors.

GAO also identified delays in FEMA’s obligation of Public Assistance program funds—used to repair or replace disaster-damaged public infrastructure such as utilities, roads, and schools—in the CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii. Specifically, on average, it took over a year for FEMA to approve funds for projects awarded after the 2018 disasters. FEMA and local officials identified potential reasons for the delays, including cost estimation challenges. FEMA established cost factors in the CNMI to account for higher construction costs, and GAO found that FEMA collects some data on the timeliness of individual steps in the process. However, FEMA has not analyzed the data to help identify causes of the delays, which could allow it to target solutions to address them.

The CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii experienced an unprecedented number of natural disasters in 2018—including typhoons, earthquakes, mudslides, and volcanic eruptions. GAO, which is the investigative arm of U.S. Congress, examined how FEMA and its federal partners prepared for and responded to these disasters, including Super Typhoon Yutu and Typhoon Mangkhut.

FEMA has worked to address these challenges, but it could improve disaster recovery in several areas. For instance, the agency could provide speedier housing assistance to survivors. GAO recommended, among other things, that FEMA streamline its housing assistance process.

In GAO’s February 2021 study, GAO Homeland Security and Justice director Chris P. Currie said FEMA had obligated $877 million from the Disaster Relief Fund for disaster assistance in the CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii as of October 2020. FEMA obligated approximately $664 million from the Disaster Relief Fund for disaster response and recovery activities in the CNMI.

Citing FEMA’s data, Currie said FEMA, state, and territorial governments had expended approximately $549 million of this funding. He said as of October 2020, FEMA projected that the agency will obligate an additional $372 million in Disaster Relief Funds for these disaster events.

The director said that, according to FEMA’s data, the majority of these additional funds—about $235 million—will be obligated through the Individual Assistance and Public Assistance programs.

EXTREME

From Page 1

The report, issued over the weekend, says climate change is expected to disrupt many aspects of life in the CNMI. Those who are already vulnerable—including children, the elderly, low-income families, and individuals with disabilities—are at greater risk from extreme weather and climate events.

Among its key findings are that the number of typhoons are expected to go down but for typhoons intensities to go up, which means fewer but stronger typhoons every year, delivering higher wind speeds and more rainfall. Also, sea levels are rising and are expected to become damaging, exacerbated by high tides, storm surges, and coastal erosion.

“More frequent and intense coastal flooding and erosion are anticipated to affect properties and infrastructure in the coming decades as sea level rise accelerates,” the report said.

Also, air temperatures are projected to keep rising under all future warming scenarios.

Among the threatened resources include high-value coastal infrastructure and the millions of dollars that ocean ecosystems add to the CNMI economy annually.

The report, called “Climate Change in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Indicators and Considerations for Key Sectors,” was prepared by the Pacific Islands Regional Climate Assessment, which is a consortium of several government, nongovernment organizations, and research entities. It is one in a series of new PIRCA reports aimed at assessing the state of knowledge about climate change indicators, impacts, and adaptive capacity of the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands and the Hawaiian archipelago. ***(More details on Thursday; see Environment section)***

Authors from the CNMI Office of Planning and Development, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office for Coastal Management, and the East-West Center—along with 50 technical contributors from local governments, NGOs, researchers, and community groups—developed the CNMI PIRCA report. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

GCEA

From Page 1

In an interview with Alex Sablan, who is a member of the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors, he said the council is still working with Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP) to look for ways to get USCIS’ touchback rule repealed.

“USCIS came back with an extension for two years that would allow for touchbacks to be instituted in 2022. It is still our effort to try to work with Congressman Kilili to work on legislation that will find more concrete process behind the CNMI-Only Workers visas, the CW process in renewals, and to look at the idea of repealing the touchback provision because it really doesn’t make a lot of sense,” he said.

Sablan says the council is doing everything it can to help minimize the impact the touchback will have with the CNMI because, without CW workers, there’s an insufficient local workforce base.

“We’re hopeful that we can have those conversations and see if we can find a way to minimize the impact on the community. The focal point is always going to be, ‘Let’s look at filling jobs with U.S. workers first,’ but we all know that we do not have a sufficient local workforce base and we need to augment with a CW program,” he said.

Alex Sablan explained that the idea of cutting back on the CW workforce does not help the CNMI economy grow.

“We need a more permanent structure behind the CW program. The diminishing numbers annually do not help us to grow the economy. We’ve had really good reports over the years, good studies determining we do not have a sufficient local workforce base. We do need to transition people out of maybe government into the private sector and diversify the economy into other industries, so that we have good paying jobs for everyone,” he said.

Alex Sablan is hopeful that the council, in collaboration with Sablan’s office, can find a more solid footing on The CW program.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, last August 2020, USCIS modified its policy on implementing the touchback rule—the requirement that CWs leave the CNMI for at least 30 days after two renewals of the CW-1 visa classification.

USCIS stated that CW-1 long-term workers, as defined in the interim final rule, are exempted from the departure requirement.

In modifying its policy, USCIS will only consider CW-1 petitions approved on or after June 18, 2020, when they apply the requirement that certain CW-1 nonimmigrant workers depart the CNMI for a period of at least 30 continuous days.

Prior to the modification, USCIS counted all consecutive petition validity periods, even those approved prior to June 18, 2020, when determining which CW-1 nonimmigrant workers are subject to the temporary departure requirement.

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15 TO SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

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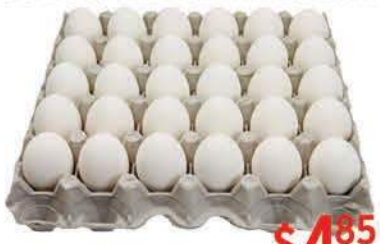
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IN CASE OF SEVEN WORKERS

Court issues show cause order vs Cui

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has issued a show-cause order against Imperial Pacific International Holdings Ltd. chair Cui Li Jie for her alleged failure to comply with a subpoena, among other things, in the labor case filed by seven ex-IPI construction workers.

U.S District Court for NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona has ordered Cui to show cause, in writing, why the court should not find her in civil contempt. Cui must also show cause as to why the court should not impose a daily fine of $10,000 until she complies with the subpoena and why the court should not impose more severe sanctions like incarceration for continued noncompliance.

Manglona gave Cui no later than noon of Feb 17 to comply with the show cause order and set a hearing for the matter on Feb. 23 at 9am.

In a statement from Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, it said that Cui did comply with the subpoena but the court was not informed. "Cui appeared in the deposition on Feb. 5 accompanied by her lawyer, Juan Lizama," IPI stated.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Bruce Berline, one of the lawyers for the seven construction workers that are suing IPI, asked the court for the order to show cause and the threat of penalty against Cui.

Berline said he properly served Cui with a subpoena to produce documents and appear for a deposition on Jan. 26 at his office.

However, after serving Cui with the subpoena, an IPI executive allegedly immediately sent text messages to intimidate the process server that he would face "legal trouble" if he did not take back the subpoena. The next day, an IPI employee returned the subpoena to Berline's office.

On the morning of Jan 26, a notary public, the Chinese interpreter, and counsel for IPI arrived at Berline's office by 9am but neither Cui nor Lizama appeared.

EDA awards NMC $13.2M grant for new CREES building

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has been awarded a $13.2-million grant by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to develop the colleges' Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services program further and its role in supporting regional economic development.

The grant is expected to create 272 new jobs and generate $13.4 million in private investments for the college.

According to NMC interim president Frankie M. Eliptico, this grant will provide great relief in assisting the college recover from the unprecedented devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu. "In particular, the grant will allow the college to build a permanent home for NMC-CREES and the important work that CREES does for the community and for the economy," said Eliptico. "We are deeply grateful to the EDA and the individuals at the agency who assisted and guided us in the grant application process."

Eliptico praised the NMC team that helped put together the grant proposal and the numerous partners who assisted and offered their support, including Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's advocacy for the project.

Interim CREES dean Patricia Coleman said each member of NMC-CREES had a role in authoring this grant proposal. "Thank you to each one of our advisory council members, the many businesses, non-profits, and agencies who wrote letters of support, Bill Torres at NMC, and especially Eliptico for the support and great leadership," said Coleman.

This project will fund construction of a facility for use as a research, extension, and development center at NMC to replace and augment existing college facilities, 87% of which were either destroyed or suffered major damage from Yutu. The new facility will house instructional space for the college's nursing program, a new simulation lab for the NMC Business Department, and other resources to develop the Commonwealth's capacity to develop industries that contribute to economic growth. The new facility will also feature classrooms and a multi-purpose stage with stadium seating.

In a press release from NMC, Torres thanked EDA for assisting NMC's future projects. "This grant funds will help NMC-CREES expand food security and stimulate increased local agriculture production, local economic activity, and build opportunities to develop youth through entrepreneurship and leadership building programs," said Torres.

An EDA statement quotes Sablan: "It has been 14 months since Northern Marinas College applied for this typhoon recovery funding and it will be a great relief to college students and staff to know that help is finally on the way. I want to thank the Biden administration for taking prompt action to help the Marianas build back better."

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
San Jose Village • P.O. Box 502149 • Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

February 15, 2021

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA) THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRWOMAN, HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021 AT 9:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CDA BUILDING, OLEAI, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  A. Roll Call
  B. Election of Officers
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of Minutes
    1. July 23, 2020
    2. July 24, 2020
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
  A. Executive Director's Report
    1. Administrative/ Personnel Matters
      a. Contract Renewal
      b. Establishment of Position & Recruitment - Economic Development Analyst
      c. Adoption of the Amendments to Employment Contract for Exempt Employees
      d. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget
      e. Equipment Purchase
    2. Qualifying Certificate (QC) Program Matters/Economic Development Activities
      a. Amendment to QC CDA-2017-01, as amended
      b. Official Action on QC CDA-2008-001, as amended
    3. Loan Matters
      a. New Loan Programs for Consideration
  B. Comptroller's Report
IV. OLD BUSINESS
  A. Rent-to-Own Home Program
V. NEW BUSINESS
  A. Legal Services
  B. Approval and Adoption of CDA Board Resolutions 2021 (001-004)
VI. OTHER MATTERS
VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. ***(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)***

/s/ AUBRY M. HOCOG
Acting Chairwoman, CDA Board of Directors

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
San Jose Village • P.O. Box 502149 • Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. Nos: (670) 234-7145/7146/6293/6245 • Fax No.: (670) 235-7147
Website: www.developcnmi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

February 15, 2021

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVISION (DCD) OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA) THRU ITS CHAIRMAN HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE DCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD ITS REGULAR MEETING ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021 AT 5:30 P.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CDA BUILDING, OLEAI, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  A. Roll Call
  B. Election of Officers
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of Minutes
    1. July 23, 2020
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
II. REPORTS
  A. DCD Funds' Status Report
IV. OLD BUSINESS
V. NEW BUSINESS
  A. Loan Applications
  B. Loan Revision Requests
VI. OTHER MATTERS
  A. New Loan Programs for Consideration
VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. ***(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 1(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)***

/s/ FRANK LEE SN. BORJA
Chairman, DCD Board of Directors

Northern Marianas College

Procurement and Property Management
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 237-6824
www.marianas.edu

CONSULTING SERVICES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
NMC RFP 21-001

Northern Marianas College (The College) is soliciting competitive sealed Proposals for the Consulting Services for the Aquaculture Parks, Saipan, Tinian and Rota projects.

Specifications and Scope of Work packets may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing February 08, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m.** for the Electronic packet, please send request to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

Pre-Proposal conference is scheduled for February 17, 2021 09:00am. attendance is strongly recommended. NMC continues to practice social distancing due to the ongoing COVID 19 restrictions. The pre-proposal conference will take place through video conference technology, Zoom. Zoom ID No.: 939 6768 1365.

Electronic Proposal submission:
NMCRFP21-001@marianas.edu
Due Date/Time: 4:00 pm, March 11, 2021, (CNMI).

Sealed Proposal, hard copies submission:
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, As Terlaje Campus
Due Date and Time: 4:00pm, March 11, 2021, (CNMI).

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA, authorized under the Smith Lever Act Section 3b & 3c award# 2017-41100.

In accordance with Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

Approved by:

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA, authorized under the Smith Lever Act Section 3b & 3c award# 2017-41100 and the Hatch Act as amended August 11, 1955, award #2019-31100 (Regular).

The Northern Marianas College is a Land Grant Institution accredited by the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association for Schools and Colleges.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: February 15, 2021 CLOSING DATE: March 02, 2021 TIME: 4:00 P.M.

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:
2021-013	CDBG-DR Housing Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED $40,000.00 to $45,000.00- per annum
2020-014	CDBG-DR Housing Specialist (2- Positions)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum
2021-015	CDBG-DR Accountant (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00- per annum

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

COMMONWEALTH LAW REVISION COMMISSION
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS JUDICIARY
House of Justice • Guma Hustisia • Ilmwal Aweewe
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PUBLIC NOTICE

REGULAR MEETING

Friday, February 19, 2021, 11:00 a.m.
Commonwealth Law Revision Commission Office
JCT Building II, Unit 6
Susupe, Saipan*

Agenda

1. **Preliminary Matters**
  a. Call to Order and Roll Call
  b. Proof of Notice of Meeting
  c. Review and Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2020 Regular Meeting
2. **Reports of the Executive Director and Committees**
  a. Office & Staff Update
  b. Publications – Print & Website: Status, Issues, & Plans
    i. NMI Reporter
    ii. CMC
    iii. NMIAC
    iv. Driver's Handbook
    v. Miscellaneous Projects
  c. FY 2021 and FY 2022 Budget & Expenditures
  d. Sales and Other Reports
3. **Unfinished Business**
4. **New Business**
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Place and Date of Next Meeting**
7. **Other Matters**

* Due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines, some commission members may be attending the meeting via videoconferencing.

Oliver M. Manglona
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 7862 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 285-3750 | Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Petitioner Charlene Manglona Ogo

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF FRANCISCO MARATITA NORITA, Deceased.	Civil Action No. 21-0006 NOTICE OF HEARING ON VERIFIED PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATRIX; and NOTICE TO CREDITORS Judge: Wesly Bogdan Date: March 4, 2021 Time: 9:00 a.m. Courtroom: Rota Courthouse

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS THE LATE FRANCISCO MARATITA NORITA:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner Charlene Manglona Ogo, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the **Estate of Francisco Maratita Norita, Decedent.** The attorney for Petitioner is **Oliver Manalang Manglona, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 7862 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950.**

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration by **Charlene Manglona Ogo**, as Petitioner, is scheduled to be heard on **March 4, 2021** at **9:00 a.m.**, at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **Rota Court House**, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the Decedent or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within Sixty (60) days of the first publication, or the claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to **OLIVER M. MANGLONA, Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated.**
Dated this 26th day of January, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

PROJECT HALIGI AWARE

PSS offers mental health program

The CNMI Public School System has launched a new program to encourage students, families, and staff to avail free mental health referral services.

Called Project Healthy, Affirming, Locally-Inclusive Grant Initiative for Advancing Awareness and Resilience in Education, or HALIGI AWARE, this new program under the Office of Student & Support Services promotes mental health awareness not only at the school level but at the community level.

Orsini

"The mental wellness of our students and faculty is a priority and in order to produce thriving learners we need to pay careful attention to their mental wellness," said Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada.

The program aims to increase awareness and increase access to mental care by establishing preventative layers of a multi-tiered system:

■ Tier 1 is a universal approach where HALIGI AWARE generally wants to create a safe environment to promote healthy and successful students.

■ Tier 2 is a targeted approach where HALIGI AWARE staff identifies students and staff at risk and places them in small groups of a specialized mental health program led by a mental health professional.

■ Tier 3 is where intensive support is provided specifically to the individual's needs and referred to community mental health partners for additional support.

The program is designed to support students in all 20 schools in the CNMI to help those who experience hopelessness, depression, and work toward resilience/strength.

In the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 48% of PSS students indicated that they experience these alarming emotions and 29% seriously considered attempting suicide. HALIGI AWARE strives to strengthen the mental wellbeing of students and create a positive environment by connecting home and community to schools.

"With over 10,000 students in PSS, our counselors and mental health professionals are the guardians of our students' academic success, social and emotional well-being," said program director Dr. Boni Pangelinan. "A goal of HALIGI AWARE is to equip every school with the American School Counselor Association recommended ratio of school counselors to students be 1:250, compared to the current PSS average ratio of 1:323."

Ada

An added HALIGI AWARE goal is a system-wide enhancement establishing school-based behavioral and mental health services for our students and families. HALIGI AWARE staff will also implement behavioral health methods that help give access to reliable services within the school and community.

According to a PSS statement last Friday, it said that HALIGI AWARE prepares teachers and administrative staff to recognize and respond to behavioral health and mental health issues among students. Establishing this would give students immediate on-site response and referral. HALIGI AWARE aims to strengthen its presence in the community by conducting accessible outreaches to engage with students and their families. Accomplishing this goal would create a positive environment for students both in school and the community.

"Furthermore, HALIGI AWARE is geared to center our students and help them be in control of their mental wellness and be able to assist their peers to do the same," said the PSS statement.

It quoted PSS Board of Education chair Andrew L. Orsini as saying, "Our children's minds cannot concentrate on school if they're busy concentrating on something else. By caring about a child's mental health, we are also molding their ability to attain knowledge and skills they can apply their whole lives. Our counselors and mental health professionals are vital to our students and community for they have the ability to shape the heart and mind."

"HALIGI AWARE supports the CNMI PSS goal of providing a safe and caring learning environment that supports behavioral health and academic achievement of all students. "Haligi" is the Chamorro term for the pillar of the latte stone, and like the *haligi*, we are here to support you," the statement added.

If you or someone that you care for needs immediate support, call:

■ PSS Student and Support Services at 664-3822. Office hours are from 7:30-4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

■ Systems of Care at 664-4604. Office hours are from 7:30-4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

■ The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1(800) 273-8255, which provides counseling and support 24 hours a day.

■ If it is an emergency call 911 or go to the CHCC Emergency Room. ***(PR)***

$1.74M for Marshalls healthcare program

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has announced $1,737,051 in funding to the Republic of the Marshall Islands' Ministry of Health and Human Services for the Four Atoll Healthcare Program. The program provides basic health care services for the people of Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrok, the four nuclear-affected atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

"We are pleased to provide this funding for healthcare services for the residents of the four nuclear-affected atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands," said OIA Director and acting assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Nikolao Pula. "These funds are provided as part of the historical and continuing relationship that we share with the people of the Marshall Islands."

The fiscal year 2021 funding provided to the Four Atoll Healthcare Program will be used to support health care clinics on Majuro, Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrok that provide health care to approximately 20,000 people. Services include primary and ancillary healthcare services such as eye care, dental care, cervical screenings, and diabetes prevention, and wellness education.

Since 2008, the Office of Insular Affairs has provided funding assistance to the Four Atoll Healthcare Program—sometimes referred to as the Section 177 Healthcare Program.

Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap, and Utrok are the four atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands that were impacted by the nuclear weapons testing program carried out by the U.S. Department of Defense between 1946 and 1958.

For more information on grant assistance provided through OIA, visit: https://www.doi.gov/oia/financial-assistance. ***(PR)***

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-GOV-040

Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings, Capitol Hill

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed bids for the ***Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings*** in Capitol Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available on **February 8, 2021** at the CIP Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan. **All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.**

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect and with the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code (NMIAC) §70.30.3-725 Gratuities and Kickbacks and §70.30.3-730 Prohibition Against Contingent Fees. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a pre-bid conference on February 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m at the project site, beginning at Building 1314, in Capitol Hill, Saipan. Questions concerning this project shall be directed to Sunny Aldan in writing by e-mail: sunnyaldan.cip@gmail.com, on or before **March 1, 2021** to the Capital Improvement Program, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or fax (670) 664-2408. All questions submitted after the given deadline will **NOT** be entertained. All responses to inquiries will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Sealed bids must be marked ***ITB20-GOV-040Roof Repair & Coating at 1300 Block Government Buildings, Capitol Hill.*** For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and two (2) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan no later than **10:30 a.m. ChST, March 10, 2021.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI **MUST** fill out the Notice of Intent to Bid Form on (PAGE 3) in order to receive this additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their actual bid documents. This Notice of Intent to Bid Form may be submitted to the Director of Procurement Services through facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or e-mailed to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp but must be received no later than 10:30 a.m., ChST, March 10, 2021. ***Note that failure to submit this Notice of Intent Bid Form will be subject to the rejection of a bid.*** For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and two (2) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **March 10, 2021,** mailed to the Acting Director of Procurement Services at P.O. Box 510008 C.K., Saipan, MP, 96950, and must be received no later than **March 19, 2021**. Failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement Services located at the former Emergency Management Office, Building No. 1301, Ascencion Drive, Capitol Hill on Saipan at ***10:30 a.m. ChST, March 22, 2021.*** However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be open at ***10:30 a.m. ChST March 10, 2021.***

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars ($25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashier's check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check. If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00.
Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract. Acceptable assets are only:

1) Cash
2) US Government Securities
3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be $200.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Notice to all Proposers/Bidders located outside of the Commonwealth Northern Mariana Islands. This Notice of Intent MUST be filled out and submitted on or before the given ITB/RFP submission deadline to the Acting Director of Procurement Services via email to a.magofna@dof.gov.mp or via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. Note that failure to submit this required document will be subject to rejection of bid/proposal.

BREACH OF ETHICAL STANDARDS
(To be part of Solicitation for quotes, ITBs and RFPs)

- ***Gratuities.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any person to offer, give or agree to give any employee or former employee, or for any employee or former employee to solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from another person, a gratuity or an offer of employment in connection with any decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, preparation of any part of a program requirement or a purchase request, influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard, rendering of advice, investigation, auditing or in any other advisory capacity in any proceeding or application, request for ruling, determination, claim or controversy, or other particular matter, pertaining to any program requirement or a contract or subcontract or to any solicitation or proposal therefor. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(a).
- ***Kickbacks.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any payment, gratuity or offer of employment to be made by or on behalf of a subcontractor under a contract to the prime contractor or higher tier subcontractor or any person associated therewith as an inducement for the award of subcontractor or order. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725(b).
- ***Contingent Fees.*** It shall be a breach of ethical standards for a person to be retained, or to retain a person, to solicit or secure government contracts upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage or contingent fee, except for retention of bona fide employees or bona fide established commercial selling agencies for the purpose of securing business. NMIAC Section 70-30.3-730.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, and to waive any imperfection in a proposal if in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

Francisco C Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Trump's acquittal is no vindication—and his enablers should be shamed and shunned

The Senate's failure to convict former President Donald Trump for inciting a deadly insurrection is a miscarriage of justice. By any standard, managers from the House of Representatives established that Trump bears responsibility for the violent assault by his crazed supporters on the Capitol in attempt to stop Congress from ratifying Joe Biden's victory in a free and fair election.

The 43 Republican senators who voted to acquit Trump—some of them hiding behind specious constitutional objections and ignoring the precedents for convicting a former officeholder—have shamed themselves rather than offend Trump's base. The Constitution rightly requires a supermajority for conviction in an impeachment trial; but the overwhelming case against Trump should have easily produced that margin.

Yet the trial was not in vain. Seven Republican senators did their duty and voted to convict, making it impossible for Trump and his apologists to claim that this impeachment was a purely partisan exercise. The trial's greatest value, however, was in establishing for a national television audience just how great a threat Trump posed to American democracy—and might pose again.

Had the Senate convicted Trump, it could have proceeded to disqualify him, under the Constitution, from holding "any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States." Ideally the powerful case mounted by the House will persuade voters and the Republican Party to bring about the same result.

The managers proved in devastating detail that Trump incited the Jan. 6 riot, not only in his inflammatory speech that day, but also in his long and duplicitous campaign to discredit the election and cling to power. They established that rioters thought they were acting at Trump's direction. They proved that Trump behaved as recklessly after the assault on the Capitol as he did before his supporters followed his exhortation to "stop the steal."

Finally, they made it clear that winking at and encouraging violence is a pattern for Trump, one that preceded his attempt to overturn the election results. As Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., said: "Jan. 6 was not some unexpected radical break from his normal law-abiding and peaceful disposition. This was his essential M.O. He knew that, egged on by his tweets, his lies and his promise of a 'wild' time in Washington to guarantee his grip on power, his most extreme followers would show up bright and early, ready to attack, ready to engage in violence, ready to 'fight like hell' for their hero."

In their defense, Trump's lawyers offered a grab bag of unconvincing arguments. They engaged in whataboutism (for example, by noting how Democrats have used the word "fight" when talking about their candidacies or their policies);

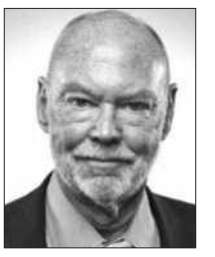
See ACQUITTAL on Next Page

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF GETTING VACCINATED FOR COVID-19...
SORE ARMS MILD FEVERS & FATIGUE.
POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF NOT GETTING VACCINATED FOR COVID-19...

Trump is gone. But America's enduring problem with political polarization remains

By GEORGE SKELTON
Los Angeles Times

Political columnist George Skelton has covered government and politics for nearly 60 years and for the Los Angeles Times *since 1974.*



President Joe Biden had barely occupied the Oval Office long enough to arrange his desk and hang pictures, but voters already held firm opinions about his job performance. That's how polarized Americans are.

In California, 89% of Democrats approved and 68% of Republicans disapproved of how he was handling his new job. Overall, counting independents, 65% of likely voters in this deep-blue state approved and 31% disapproved.

One telling stat: Only 4% were undecided.

Come on! It was just Biden's first full day in office when the Public Policy Institute of California began polling. It stopped 10 days later. How could that short span at the infancy of a presidency possibly provide voters enough time to form an intellectually honest opinion of his performance?

Answer: It couldn't. They mostly judged him on his party affiliation.

"People had already made up their minds because of partisan politics," PPIC pollster and Chief Executive Mark Baldassare told me. "It's remarkable…. And independents tend to lean Democrat."

But Bob Shrum, director of the Center for the Political Future at USC and a former Democratic strategist, thinks Biden mostly earned the high rating himself.

"His inaugural address probably had an impact," Shrum says. "I thought it was the best inaugural speech since 1961," when Democrat John F. Kennedy waxed eloquent.

Biden wasn't nearly as eloquent as JFK. But Shrum says he "touched a nerve in a country yearning to go back—and forward—to an America where we did have some common purpose."

Gallup polled nationally during the same period and reported an "extreme partisan gap."

"Initial evaluations of presidents are more influenced by Americans' party identification now than in the past," Gallup says.

The polling organization found an 87-percentage-point gap between Democratic and Republican views of Biden's job performance—98% of Democrats approved, but only 11% of Republicans did.

Overall, it found 57% approval and 37% disapproval.

"Republicans' low initial support for Biden is a strong indicator that the nation will remain politically polarized," Gallup says.

A second major California polling outfit, the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, surveyed state voters starting on Biden's third day. Voters weren't asked about the president's job performance, only their "impression" of him.

Same result: 87% of Democrats had a favorable impression, 80% of Republicans viewed him unfavorably. Overall, including independents, California voters' impressions of Biden were 62% favorable, 32% unfavorable, 6% no opinion.

"It's a hyperpartisan world," IGS poll director Mark DiCamillo says. "The distance between parties is wider than at any time in history—on most issues. It's just awful.

"We even get partisan replies on whether people should wear a mask. I've never seen this kind of stuff."

One negative result of political polarization is closed minds that aren't open to facts and independent thinking. The prime recent example is so many Republicans buying Trump's lie that the election was "stolen" from him by voter fraud.

In the IGS poll, 93% of Democrats blamed Trump's fiery rhetoric for "contributing" to the deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. But only 29% of Republicans did. Among Republicans, 83% thought "the mainstream news media" contributed. Really!

The PPIC poll found several instances in which voters' views basically hadn't changed since January 2020. For example, Gov. Gavin Newsom's job approval rating: 52% now; 49% a year ago before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

There were other similar year-to-year answers on these questions: Is climate change a major threat? Overwhelmingly yes. Should there be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay here legally? Strong support. Should there be a government-run "public option" health care plan? You bet. Is California headed in the right direction? Voters are almost evenly divided.

"Think about it," says Dan Schnur, a USC and UC Berkeley

See POLARIZATION on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Final Programmatic Agreement: Section one

"The Final Programmatic Agreement Between the Commander, Joint Region Marianas and The Guam State Historic Preservation Officer, Regarding Military Training and Testing On and Within The Surrounding Waters of the Island of Guam," commonly referred to as the "PA," is a 16-page document made up of three sections: "whereas," "stipulations," and "signatories." There are four separate appendices to the Final PA.

This document is supposed to take the place of the 2009 PA that expired over a year ago. The Guam Legislature is currently waiting on an opinion from the Attorney General's Office in response to a request put forth by Guam Sen. Telena Nelson.

Euphemistic, politically deodorized, military controlled

The first section comes across as lifeless, over-sanitized, dry, and vague. Not once is the word "Chamorro" referenced.

The word "whereas" appears 12 times in the first section. This section basically says that the military: 1) controls the Marianas Islands chain with a focus on Guam, 2) that an assessment was made about what environmental damage will be created in and around Guam from military operations, 3) that the word "undertaking" refers to military activities that will produce environmental damage on and offshore of Guam, 4) that these environmentally damaging activities are being done to maintain American dominance in the region, 5) that these actions will somehow protect the United States and Guam, 6) that the military conducted surveys to find out what kinds of damage will take place from military actions using standards that may or may not address Guam's unique environment, 7) that military training will damage or destroy rare resources, 8) that similar kinds of state sponsored exercises in violence will be repeated over and over to the degree that the military was prompted to produce a PA, 9) that repetitive training for going to war will damage or destroy rare resources and that the PA is somehow supposed to bring some kind of agreed upon resolution to the military's destructive practices, 10) that the Navy is letting the governor, two Guam-based entities and one other federal organization that things will get damaged or destroyed, 11) that the Navy told another federal entity that the degree of rare resource damage will be so extensive that it necessitates federal regulatory guidance on provisions that pertain to historic properties, and, 12) that these provisions have triggered the application of two specific sections of a law that was originally passed to acknowledge the importance of preserving so-called national heritage resources, followed by a statement that refers to the above referenced parties as "signatories, invited signatories, or concurring parties to the PA…"

This "whereas" section concludes with a sentence that begins with "now, therefore" that basically says that the military and the Guam State Historic Preservation Officer agree to the idea that the military will continue its state sponsored preparations for violence that will bring about damage and destruction, in accordance with making sure that American national laws are properly adhered to.

More public input and hearings may be needed as more questions arise

More public input and hearings may be needed because the language used in this section is vague, incomplete, and mystifying. If the military is attempting to cleverly sow additional confusion, frustration, anger and distrust amongst our Chamorro families, friends, and relatives, a case can be made that they are doing an excellent job.

Here are some questions: what is the definition of an "executive agent"? Does the governor of Guam have the option to bypass this executive agent and go to the source—the Navy secretariat located at the Pentagon to be a signatory? If not, why not?

Do all of our Chamorro families, friends, and relatives truly understand the significance of references made to a three-mile distance from the shore? And what precisely does the phrase "shore baseline" mean and how is this shore baseline distance derived? What precisely does the Navy mean when it says that it "analyzed the impact of military training and testing on and within surrounding waters" [without having to refer to a separate pdf document]? Why is there no mention made of military produced pollution to the oceans, reef areas, land, and sub surfaces?

Section one talks about the criticality of "military readiness to personnel safety and to the defense of the United States, including and in particular, of Guam." What is the definition of "personnel" here? Does this word "personnel" include all villagers and all our Chamorro families, friends, and relatives? Is Guam really being defended or is this about the military defending the billions of dollars of resources located exclusively on DoD installations? If this language is to mean the defense of the entire island of Guam, why does Guam not have a hardened underground nuclear bomb and fallout shelter infrastructure in place, in every village to help protect the lives of our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander families, friends, and acquaintances?

Signatories? Parties?

Let's talk about signatories. What does this really mean? What is the significance of a signatory? Why are there "signatories and invited signatories"? What's the reasoning behind having two types of signatories? What does it mean to have "concurring parties"? Why is the elected governor of Guam's signature below the admiral's signature? Why are there no signature lines for representatives from the Guam Legislature or the Mayors Council of Guam?

Stipulations? Provisions?

Let's also talk about stipulations. What precisely does this mean? What is the difference between a "stipulation," a "clause," and/or a "provision"'? What are the consequences—political, social, and legal—of having stipulations contained in the Final PA as opposed to something else?

More demystification is needed

More needs to be done to further demystify the Final PA and the language contained in this first section because the language is vague and sanitized. Until our ancient Chamorro Pacific Islander families are completely comfortable with understanding what a PA is, and what it is not, true island and national security cannot be attained.

'RICK'S COLUMN'
By RICK PEREZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs *at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.*

ACQUITTAL

From Page 8

made specious appeals to the 1st Amendment to excuse Trump's fomenting; portrayed the impeachment as an attempt to disenfranchise Trump's supporters; and suggested that in impeaching Trump the House was motivated by hatred for the former president rather than revulsion at the violence he incited and a determination to punish him for it.

Trump's lawyers seized on a throwaway line in Trump's speech about peaceful protest to transmute the incendiary demand to "stop the steal" at the Capitol into an appeal for ordinary political action. And they suggested, fallaciously, that the fact that some of the rioters may have planned violence before Trump's speech—or showed up at the Capitol before the speech—meant that Trump couldn't have incited others to storm the Capitol.

Fair-minded Americans—including many Trump voters—should come away from this revealing trial resolved never to allow Donald J. Trump to be treated as a legitimate participant in American political life, let alone be returned to the White House.

Sadly, given the polarization that Trump both promoted and profited from—and a stark divide in the media landscape—many of the former president's most fervent followers will see his acquittal as vindication of a president who was subjected by the House to "constitutional cancel culture."

Nor is it clear that the Republican Party is ready to relinquish its connection with Trump. Consider the way some state party organizations have reacted to members of Congress who voted their conscience in the impeachment process.

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the third-most senior Republican in the House, was censured by the Wyoming Republican Party for voting to impeach Trump; the state party also called on her to resign. After Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., voted that it was constitutional for the impeachment trial to proceed, the Republican Party of Louisiana issued a statement expressing profound disappointment and adding that "former President Trump is innocent of the politically motivated, bogus charges now pending against him in a kangaroo court presided over by an openly hostile political opponent."

A president who has been twice impeached and who fed lies to his supporters about a rigged election—ultimately delivering a harangue that sent some of them to invade the Capitol—should be shunned and shamed despite this acquittal. Republican senators who voted to acquit Trump because of a supposed constitutional objection should be in the forefront of the effort to ostracize him from their party.

As for the millions of voters who supported Trump, they need not renounce their past support for him—or their agreement with his policy positions—to recognize that he betrayed them as well when he lied about a "rigged" election and incited the mob. He is not worthy of their loyalty.

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POLARIZATION

From Page 8

political science professor and former Republican operative. "In the last year, we've had a pandemic, a recession, racial reckoning and two impeachments, and no one has changed his or her mind about anything."

That's a stretch, but a good point. People remain in their ideological boxes, unreachable by pragmatic politicians. And this makes compromise on public policy nearly impossible.

And what's causing the polarization?

"The advantages of online communication and social media far outweigh the downsides, but that technology allows us to construct news networks of our own that become ideological igloos," Schnur says. "And no opposing opinion or information can penetrate the igloo."

Schnur adds: "People who disagree with you are no longer reasonable human beings with just different ideas. They're stupid or evil or worse."

"People have gone into their silos," says Marty Wilson, executive vice president of the California Chamber of Commerce and a longtime political player.

"I don't think polarization is a bad thing necessarily. But what we've lost is respect—respect for somebody else's point of view, respect for the (democratic) process, respect for the institutions."

Republican consultant Rob Stutzman says "we're burrowed into caves that satisfy what we want the world to be like."

An anti-Trumper, Stutzman blames politicians for fertilizing polarization.

"There's a short-term incentive to perpetuate the division because politicians are essentially empowered by one extreme or the other," he says. "Very few politicians are in the middle."

Biden is an exception, however, and it paid off last year.

"If Biden can help bore America to death about politics again, that would be helpful," Stutzman says.

We could also teach high schoolers more about civics and how democracy requires compromise. We could force ourselves to watch and read both sides. We could bring back "equal time" mandates for broadcast networks.

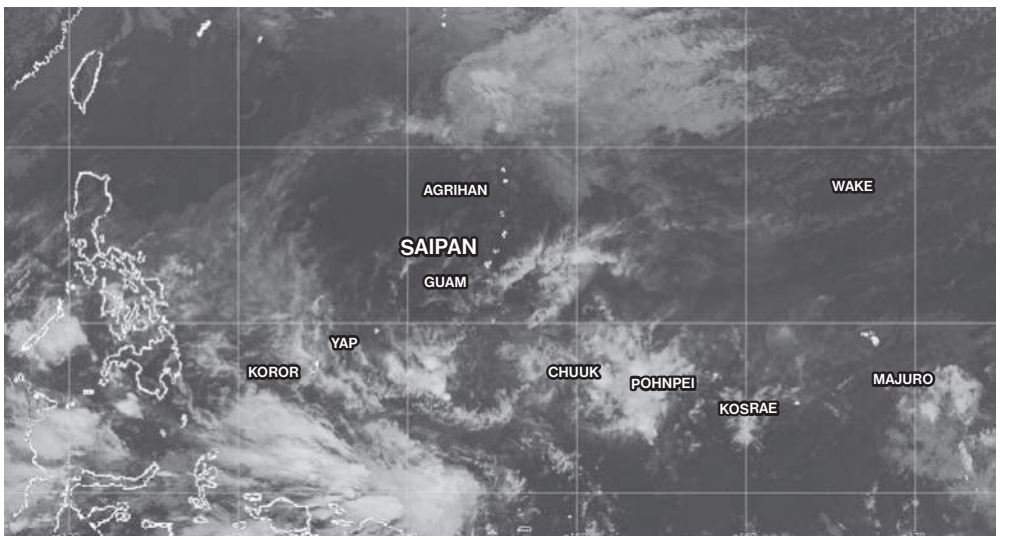
But for the foreseeable future, we'll most likely remain in our igloos, silos and caves, devoid of outside light.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers in the evening, then partly cloudy with isolated light showers after midnight. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with scattered showers.
86º / 76º	86º / 76º	87º / 77º	87º / 77º	86º / 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:52 AM, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Mostly clear skies along with light to moderate trade winds extend across the Marianas. Buoys and altimetry data indicate seas between 4 and 7 feet in the coastal waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Showers	83º / 77º
Palau	Partly Cloudy	86º / 79º
Yap	Thunderstorm	85º / 79º
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86º / 80º
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86º / 79º
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85º / 78º
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84º / 80º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:41 AM	6:20 PM
Tuesday	6:41 AM	6:21 PM
Wednesday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:01 AM	9:17 PM	-
Tuesday	9:36 AM	10:04 PM	-
Wednesday	10:11 AM	10:51 PM	-
Thursday	10:47 AM	11:38 PM	-
Friday	11:25 AM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	77º / 63º
Beijing	Sunny	50º / 25º
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	66º / 55º
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	77º / 68º
London	Cloudy	55º / 50º
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	66º / 44º
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91º / 75º
Melbourne	Windy	93º / 57º
Miami	Showers	76º / 63º
New York	Partly Cloudy	56º / 47º
Osaka	Rain	57º / 37º
Paris	Cloudy	54º / 46º
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	48º / 28º
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	59º / 45º
Salem	Showers	74º / 56º
San Francisco	Sunny	54º / 34º
Seoul	Sunny	39º / 19º
Tokyo	Rain	61º / 41º
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	67º / 51º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:01 AM	Low Tide	-0.03
10:28 AM	High Tide	1.67
4:38 PM	Low Tide	0.66
9:51 PM	High Tide	1.53

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Cup BAB opens in San Jose

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Cup BAB in San Jose will have its long-awaited opening today and will serve the same Korean topping deliciousness customers have grown accustomed to at its main branch at BAB Korean Restaurant in Garapan.

Located as the former snack bar on the left side of the San Jose Mart, Cup BAB in San Jose actually soft-opened last week but will be fully operational beginning today, according to restaurant staff Dante Conlu.

For the meantime, Cup BAB San Jose will only have nine food items and three kinds of drinks. That will be the:

■ Original BAB (beef bulgogi, noodles, lettuce, rice);

■ Volcano BAB (spicy pork, noodles, lettuce, rice);

■ Ugly BAB (fried chicken, noodles, lettuce, rice);

■ Combo BAB (beef, noodles, lettuce, and rice);

■ LA-BBQ BAB (beef short ribs, kimchee, noodles, lettuce, rice);

■ Shake BAB (rice topped with vegetables and beef);

■ Tteok (rice cake and fish cake in spicy sauce);

■ Dak Gangjeong (sweet and sour chicken); and

■ Mandoo (4 piece soft-fried dumplings)

MARK RABAGO
Currently, Cup BAB San Jose will only have nine food items and three kinds of drinks.

MARK RABAGO
The newly opened Cup BAB is located on the left side of San Jose Mart.

MARK RABAGO
Cup BAB San Jose will offer the same food that its customers have enjoyed at the original Cup BAB in Garapan.

The three drinks available are Hawaiian ice tea, cinnamon/ginger tea, and ice coffee.

"We will cook the same food that our customers enjoy at the original Cup BAB in Garapan. We'd like to offer more, but because of the limited space at our kitchen in San Jose we can only offer nine items," said Conlu, who added that plans are afoot to include Galbi Soup and Kimchi Soup to the menu.

Unlike the drive-thru service at the Garapan branch, Cup BAB San Jose is only a take-out curbside and walk-up service.

Conlu said the opening of Cup BAB San Jose finally fulfills BAB Korean Restaurant's promise to its many customers in San Jose, Oleai, and the more southern part of Saipan to open a second branch closer to home.

"They have asked us for the longest time to open a new branch, even just a satellite location somewhere in the middle of the island. I guess, we've finally fulfilled our end of the bargain," said Conlu.

He also has good news for fans of BAB Korean Restaurant's dine-in service. Conlu said the flagship Garapan restaurant will soon open its doors to dine-in patrons.

Cup BAB San Jose is open from Monday to Sunday, 10am-8pm. For more information or for pre-orders, call 235-4222.

High court denies accused Ghosn smugglers' bid to stay in the US

BOSTON (AP)—The U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way Saturday for the extradition of an American father and son wanted by Japan in the escape of former Nissan Motor Co. boss Carlos Ghosn.

Justice Stephen Breyer denied a bid to put the extradition on hold to give Michael and Peter Taylor time to pursue an appeal in their case challenging the U.S. officials' plans to hand them over to Japan.

Michael Taylor, a U.S. Army Special Forces veteran, and his son are accused of helping Ghosn, who led the Japanese automaker for two decades, flee the country last year with Ghosn tucked away in a box on a private jet. The flight went first to Turkey, and then to Lebanon, where Ghosn has citizenship but which has no extradition treaty with Japan.

Lawyers for the Taylors argue the men can't legally be extradited and will be treated unfairly in the Japan. Their lawyers told the Supreme Court in a brief filed Friday that the men would face harsh treatment in the Japanese criminal justice system.

"The issues raised by petitioners merit full and careful consideration, and the stakes are enormous for them. The very least the U.S. courts owe the petitioners is a full chance to litigate these issues, including exercising their appellate rights, before they are consigned to the fate that awaits them at the hands of the Japanese government," their attorneys wrote.

U.S. authorities had said they would not hand the men over to Japan while their bid for a stay was pending before Breyer, an attorney for the Taylors said.

Michael Taylor said in an interview with The Associated Press that he feels betrayed that the U.S. would try to turn him over to Japan after his service to the country. Taylor refused to discuss the details of the case because of the possibility that he could be tried in Japan, but he insisted his son had no involvement.

The 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston refused Thursday to put the extradition on hold, finding that the Taylors are unlikely to succeed on the merits of their case. The Taylors have been locked up at a suburban Boston jail since their arrest last May.

Breaking down the tax implications of PPP loans

The approaching tax season is raising fresh questions for business owners who received a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program.

Can you deduct expenses paid with your loan funds? Do you need to do anything differently this year? And if your loan is forgiven, is it considered taxable income?

Answers to these questions have been hard to nail down, in part due to shifting guidance from the IRS. But new rules spelled out in the latest round of coronavirus relief help put an end to the confusion.

"Doing your taxes wasn't easy before COVID," says Keith Hall, president and CEO of the National Association for the Self-Employed. "The good news is this year isn't going to be any harder than tax returns you've had in the past."

FORGIVEN PPP LOANS ARE NOT TAXABLE

"Historically and forever, if you have a business loan and it is forgiven, that automatically is taxable income. It's been in the internal revenue code forever," Hall says.

Paycheck Protection Program loans break from that code. Congress specified, and the IRS clarified, that forgiven PPP loans will not count as income. This applies whether your entire loan is forgiven or just a portion.

"If it is forgiven, it will not be taxable income. Period," Hall says.

YOU CAN DEDUCT EXPENSES PAID WITH A PPP LOAN

This one has been more of a moving target. Initially, the IRS' position was this: Expenses paid with PPP loan funds can't be deducted if the loan was or will be forgiven.

However, that changed with the coronavirus relief act signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020, which specifies that deductions shouldn't be denied simply due to the loan being forgiven.

That means expenses paid with your PPP loan are deductible.

This outcome effectively creates two layers of tax benefits for PPP loan recipients, says Roshani Pandey, financial advisor and founder of True Root Financial in San Francisco.

"The first benefit is making the loan income-tax-free," Pandey says. "The second is allowing businesses to claim income deductions on expenses paid."

BUSINESS TAXES ARE NOT AN ALLOWABLE USE OF PPP FUNDS

The latest round of coronavirus relief also gives business owners more flexibility with how they spend PPP funds. Newly covered costs include protective equipment, property damage and business software.

Business taxes aren't part of that expanded list. So if you use your PPP loan to pay your business taxes, that amount won't be forgiven.

YOU CAN STILL CLAIM THE EMPLOYEE RETENTION TAX CREDIT

Businesses can now claim the Employee Retention Tax Credit if they meet the requirements. There's one important caveat: You can't claim wages paid with a forgiven PPP loan.

You can, however, claim the credit on wages paid above and beyond the amount forgiven.

To qualify for the tax credit, you must continue to pay employees despite being temporarily shut down because of COVID-19 restrictions or suffering a 20% drop in gross receipts compared with the same quarter in the prior year.

These changes were ushered in with the coronavirus relief bill on Dec. 27, 2020, but are retroactive to March 12, 2020. The credit is good on qualified wages paid up to July 1, 2021. ***(AP)***

Nation

Biden White House seeks to turn page on Trump

WASHINGTON (AP)—The end of former President Donald Trump's impeachment trial opens a new chapter for his successor in the White House.

But while President Joe Biden and his team are eager to move past the impeachment, the bitterly partisan tone of the proceedings underscores the deep challenges ahead as the president and his party try to push forward their agenda and address historic crises.

Biden, who was at the Camp David presidential retreat when the Senate voted Saturday to acquit Trump, had acknowledged that Democrats needed to hold the former president responsible for the siege of the U.S. Capitol but did not welcome the way it distracted from his agenda.

The trial ended with every Democrat and seven Republicans voting to convict Trump, but the 57-43 vote was far from the two-third threshold required for conviction. Whether the seven GOP votes against Trump offered Biden any new hope for bipartisan cooperation within Congress remained an open question.

In a statement, Biden referenced those GOP votes in favor of convicting the former president—and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's own indictment of Trump's actions—as evidence that "the substance of the charge," that Trump was responsible for inciting violence at the Capitol, is "not in dispute."

But he quickly moved on to the work ahead, sounding a note of unity and declaring that "this sad chapter in our history has reminded us that democracy is fragile" and that "each of us has a duty and responsibility as Americans, and especially as leaders, to defend the truth and to defeat the lies."

"It's a task we must undertake together. As the United States of America," Biden said.

Biden made a point of not watching the trial live, choosing to comment only briefly on the searing images of the riot that gripped the nation. Though his White House publicly argued that the trial did not hinder their plans, aides privately worried that a lengthy proceeding could bog down the Senate and slow the passage of his massive COVID-19 relief bill. That $1.9 trillion proposal is just the first part of a sweeping legislative agenda Biden hopes to pass as he battles the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 480,000 Americans and rattled the nation's economy.

"The No. 1 priority for Democrats and the Biden administration is going to be to deliver on the promises that have been made on the pandemic, both on the vaccine front and the economic front," said Democratic strategist Josh Schwerin.

The end of the impeachment trial frees the party to focus on less divisive and more broadly popular issues and policies, like the coronavirus relief package, which polls show has significant support among Americans.

Throughout his campaign, Biden worked to avoid being defined by Trump and his controversies and instead sought to draw a contrast on policy and competence, a guiding principle that he and his aides have carried over into the White House.

His team kept up a steady drumbeat of events during the trial, including an update on vaccine development and Biden's first visit to the Pentagon as commander in chief. With the proceedings on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue now over, the White House plans to increase its efforts to spotlight the fight against the pandemic and push past Trump's chaos.

7 Republicans vote to convict Trump in impeachment trial

WASHINGTON (AP)—Seven Republicans voted Saturday to convict former President Donald Trump in his Senate trial, easily the largest number of lawmakers to ever vote to find a president of their own party guilty at impeachment proceedings.

While lawmakers acquitted Trump of inciting the Jan. 6 Capitol attack, they voted 57-43 to convict him — short of the two-thirds majority needed to find him guilty. Still, with seven Republicans joining all 50 Democrats in voting "guilty," the Senate issued an unmistakable bipartisan chorus of condemnation of the former president that could have political implications for a GOP conflicted over its future.

"If I can't say what I believe that our president should stand for, then why should I ask Alaskans to stand with me?" Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska told reporters.

Besides Murkowski, other Republican senators voting against Trump were Richard Burr of North Carolina, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania.

Underscoring the perils of affronting Trump and his legions of GOP loyalists, by late evening top Republicans from at least two of the defecting senators' states had blasted them.

Pennsylvania GOP Chairman Lawrence Tabas issued a statement saying he shared "the disappointment of many of our grassroots leaders and volunteers" over Toomey's vote. Louisiana's Republican Party said, "We condemn, in the strongest possible terms" Cassidy's vote and said its executive committee voted unanimously to censure him.

Democrats holding out long-shot hopes of convicting Trump would have needed 17 Republicans to prevail, which as expected proved an unreachable goal. That hope died after the influential Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he would vote to acquit because he believed lawmakers had no jurisdiction over a former president.

Even so, McConnell delivered searing words against Trump in a speech after the vote, saying the former president was "practically and morally responsible" for provoking the attack on lawmakers as they formally certified Trump's Electoral College defeat by Joe Biden. Five people died, and the House impeached Trump for inciting insurrection.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-017

CNMI STREETLIGHT EFFICIENCY PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of Light Emitting Diode (LED) streetlight luminaires to promote energy and cost saving measures on the power distribution system in Saipan and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded from the United states Department of the Interior (USDOIA).

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-IFB-21-017, CNMI Streetlight Efficiency Project)"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 4, 2021** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 10, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Adrian Reyes, CUC Power Division Engineer via email adrian.reyes@cucgov.org; Alfred Palattao, CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal if in its sole opinion to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-018

RELOCATION OF UTILITIES AT ROAD (A-F) AND ROUTE 205/206 TINIAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general relocation of gate valves, water meters, waterlines, fire hydrant assembly and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Defense (USDOD). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USDOD.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **February 2, 2021 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-018, *Relocation of Utilities at Road A-F and Route 205/206 Tinian*"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 25, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 09, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Technician, Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Powerful Japan quake sets off landslide, minor injuries

TOKYO (AP)—Residents in northeastern Japan on Sunday cleaned up clutter and debris in stores and homes after a strong earthquake set off a landslide on a highway, damaged some buildings and parts of bullet train lines and caused power blackouts for thousands of people. The 7.3 magnitude temblor late Saturday shook the quake-prone areas of Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures that 10 years ago had been hit by a powerful earthquake that triggered a tsunami and a meltdown at a nuclear power plant. More than 120 people suffered mostly minor injuries, most of them by falling objects and cuts while stepping on broken glass. Three people were confirmed with serious injuries but there were no reports of deaths, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato said. Tokyo Electric Power Co., the utility that runs the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant that was hit by the March 2011 disaster, said the water used to cool spent fuel rods near the reactors had spilled because of the shaking. But there were no radiation leaks or other irregularities, TEPCO said. The quake did not cause a tsunami because the epicenter was deep at 55 kilometers (34 miles) beneath the ocean. Noriko Kamaya, a Japan Meteorological Agency spokesperson, said in a news conference that the quake is considered to be an aftershock of the 9.1 magnitude quake in 2011.

Burmese in Japan march in protest of military coup

TOKYO (AP)—Thousands of people from Myanmar living in Japan marched in downtown Tokyo on Sunday to protest the military coup back home, some holding photos of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi and signs deploring the loss of human rights. The gathering, which started in a park and trailed through busy streets, thronged by police, was the latest in a series of protests in a nation that more than 33,000 Burmese have made their home. "I don't like the military government," said Sum Lut Htu Ti, a restaurant worker who has lived in Japan for three decades. She was marching in a large contingent of the Kachin ethnic group, wearing colorful traditional clothing. "I want to fight with her," she said of Suu Kyi, the nation's de facto leader who remains in detention following the Feb. 1 coup. The recent demonstrations in Tokyo appear to be growing, drawing more people each time. A few days ago, they gathered holding artificial candles and glow sticks in an evening vigil. Sunday's gathering also drew some Japanese protesters, including representatives from labor unions, who shouted slogans demanding freedom for Suu Kyi and promised solidarity. They said they hoped the Japanese government and people would try to help Myanmar by rejecting and putting pressure on the junta, including with economic sanctions. Win Kyaw and his wife Ma Thida, both wearing the symbolic protest color of red, said they joined because they were worried about what they saw as the increasing violence in Myanmar. Ma Thida, who held a framed portrait of Suu Kyi, pointed to the flowers in her own hair, noting she was wearing them proudly in her honor. "Just like those in Myanmar, we outside the country feel the same way and want to send our message," said Win Kyaw, who has lived in Japan for 33 years and works at a restaurant.

UK's Johnson: Vaccines worldwide takes a 'colossal mission'

LONDON (AP)—British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to appeal to leaders of the world's richest nations to unite in a "colossal mission'' to get COVID-19 vaccines to every country and to lead a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, according to remarks released Saturday. Johnson is set to chair a virtual meeting of leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations on Friday. It will be the first session led by Johnson since the U.K. took over the G-7's presidency in January. "The solutions to the challenges we face – from the colossal mission to get vaccines to every single country, to the fight to reverse the damage done to our ecosystems and lead a sustainable recovery from coronavirus – lie in the discussions we have with our friends and partners around the world,'' Johnson said in the remarks released before the event. Rich countries have been criticized for buying up more COVID-19 vaccines than they need, leaving developing nations without access to the lifesaving shots. Public health experts warn that the coronavirus pandemic won't be brought under control until people everywhere are vaccinated.

Brazil governors seek own vaccine supplies as stocks run low

SAO PAULO (AP)—Brazilian state governors are pursuing their own vaccine supply plans, with some expressing concern that President Jair Bolsonaro's government won't deliver the shots required to avoid interrupting immunization efforts. Governors are under pressure from mayors, some of whose vaccine stocks have already been depleted, including three cities in the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro. Northeastern Bahia state's capital Salvador suspended vaccination on Thursday because supplies are dwindling. Brazil's two biggest cities, Rio and Sao Paulo, are expected to be without shots in a matter of days. The governor who has pushed hardest to shore up his state's own vaccine supply during the pandemic is Sao Paulo's João Doria, a former Bolsonaro ally turned adversary. The president repeatedly criticized Doria's deal to purchase 100 million CoronaVac shots from Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac and said the federal government wouldn't buy them. Bolsonaro reversed course in January, facing delay in the delivery of the only vaccine his administration purchased and watching as other nations began immunizing their citizens while Brazil's 210 million people were on hold.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-010

A&E Design Services for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (S19-068)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Design Services of the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in Agingan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAES-21-010, A&E Design Services for Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 11, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Westen Knudsen, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-015

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE WATER & WASTEWATER CERTIFIED OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms for Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program for the islands Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project is funded by the US Department of Interior-Office of Insular Affairs.

Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$100.00** for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"CUC-RFP-21-015, Professional Services for the Water & Wastewater Certified Operator Training Program"* to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on February 19, 2021**. Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Proposal shall be submitted on the provided Proposal Forms. Proposals will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal under the contract. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Request for Proposals should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the Proposer, awarded a contract.

This Request for Proposals does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract(s) is contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Board of Director's approval. The contract(s) will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 29, 2021** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Officer, via email address-manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Vivian Santos, Human Resources Manager via email-Vivian.santos@cucgov.org; Francisco Matsunaga, HR Generalist, via email francisco.matsunaga@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Senior Administrative Support Technician via email- marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Health & Wellness

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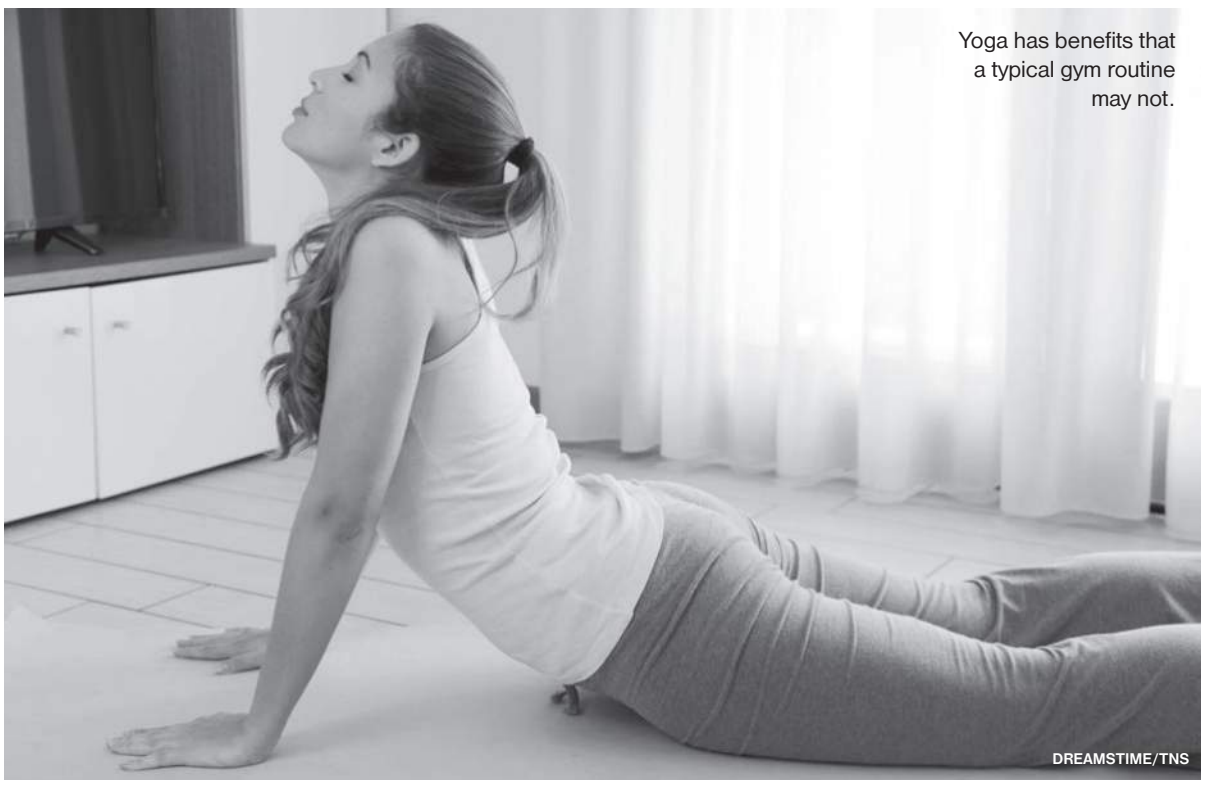
MAYO CLINIC Q AND A

The health benefits of yoga



Yoga has benefits that a typical gym routine may not.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I have always been fairly flexible, so I have never felt compelled to include yoga in my fitness routine. Typically, I just walk and maybe do some weights for strength training. I was talking to a friend who said her physical therapist recommended yoga as part of a well-rounded workout routine. What is the benefit of yoga? Should I add it to my routine or stick with what I'm doing?

ANSWER: Yoga is a wonderful form of exercise that provides benefits that walking or strength training don't provide. In Eastern cultures, yoga is not seen as exercise, but rather "a moving meditation." In the Western world, many people know power yoga or vinyasa yoga, which are classified as exercise.

Regardless of the type of yoga, when practiced mindfully, there are many advantages for the body, mind and soul. Yoga can provide three primary benefits that a typical gym routine may not provide.

Benefit 1: Yoga improves the function of the nervous system. Since yoga is based on breathing, parts of the nervous system are affected when exhales are lengthened and breath is controlled. This is cued throughout particular yoga sequences. Specifically, yoga can help lower the fight-or-flight response and improve the body's "rest-and-digest" response.

Practicing slow, controlled breathing stimulates the body's vagus nerve, which takes information about the current state of relaxation and relays it to the rest of the body, including the brain. One area affected when the vagal nerve is stimulated is the parasympathetic nervous system, which controls the body's rest and digestion functions. The mindful breathing practiced in yoga increases the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system. As a result, yoga lowers the heart rate, improves digestion and quality of sleep, and strengthens the immune system. Another benefit is an improved stress level.

Benefit 2: Yoga can improve joint range of motion. The difference between flexibility and active range of motion is important. Think of flexibility as how much a muscle can be passively stretched. In contrast, range of motion is how much muscles can be used to control a joint's movement.

It is not uncommon these days for people to report neck and back pain, and poor range of motion in their thoracic spine due to constant sitting, typing on computers and looking down at cellphones. Yoga is excellent in improving thoracic range of motion because many poses involve extending the body through the rib cage and using strength to hold these postures.

Yoga incorporates all four motions of the spine: flexion, extension, rotation and side-bending. Therefore, yoga can prevent stiffness and disuse that also can occur with age. Being able to control the available range of motion in joints is crucial to good posture and decreasing the risk of injury.

Benefit 3: Yoga improves dynamic balance, decreasing the risk of falling. Think of balance like a muscle. By working hard at different exercises, balance can improve. This is similar to improved strength by lifting weights.

Balance is a complex system, requiring three parts: the sensation of the foot on the ground, or proprioception; vision; and the inner ear, or vestibular system. These three parts tell the brain where the head is in space. These three components work together to control both static and dynamic balance. Yoga trains the proprioception and visual systems to improve balance. Depending on the pose, cues are sent to focus, for instance, on the foot rooted to the ground. By concentrating in an attempt to maintain contact, the big toe, little toe and heel form a tripod of sorts, which in turn helps focus the proprioception portion of balance.

In yoga, you may hear the term "drishti," which refers to obtaining a focused gaze or focus in the mind. The concept comes into play as people aim to hold a pose with their eyes closed. Certain poses become more challenging with eyes closed, which improves the visual part of balance.

Also, moving back and forth between poses without fully touching a limb to the ground can increase the ability to dynamically move and not lose balance. Over time, this will reduce the risk of falling while walking on uneven ground or turning quickly.

While it may be hard to add one more thing to your busy life routine, incorporating yoga into your workout routine can benefit your stress level, mobility and balance in ways that may not be achieved from a regular gym routine. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Lauren Hubbard, D.P.T., Physical Therapy, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida

Mirroring healthy behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic

Have you ever heard a lame joke but see everyone else is laughing so you find yourself giggling along? Or lean into a conversation when others were, as well? Or yawned following another person's yawn even though you don't feel sleepy?

These are examples of a common behavior called mirroring, where people mimic gestures of people they like. It happens all the time without people realizing it. This subconscious behavior is often referred to as the chameleon effect. Some examples include mirroring another's gestures, expressions, tone of voice or body position.

Creates connections, influences attitudes

Humans are social beings, and mirroring can create powerful connections with others, and cause others to like and trust you more. In these situations, imitation is a form of flattery and builds rapport with others.

In addition to mirroring gestures, people often mirror the attitudes they adopt and the decisions they make after important people in their lives. At a young age, people tend to adopt attitudes, gestures and behaviors from family members and close friends. As they age, the circle of influence is expanded to include other people of importance, such as teachers, faith leaders, sports figures, celebrities and politicians.

For example, you are more likely to buy a product that is used or promoted by a beloved sports figure or celebrity, or adjust your attitudes to mirror that of politician or another important figure in your life. Research has shown that people react more positively to celebrity advice and subconsciously adapt behaviors to become more like the celebrities they admire.

These attitudes and behaviors can affect more than just your bank account. They can affect your overall health.

COVID-19 behaviors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious disease experts have asked people to adopt behaviors to slow the spread of the virus, such as wearing a mask, frequently washing hands, staying home and maintaining social distance from others. However, people's compliance with these recommendations is influenced by compliance of others nearby, on TV or online.

This harkens back to people's adolescent years and a desire to be part of the "in" crowd. People's brains are wired to mirror the behaviors they see so they fit in and find acceptance. Their attitudes toward COVID-19 and behaviors to prevent COVID-19 spread are no different.

For example, if you are the only person wearing a face mask at the gym or in a store, you are more likely to remove it. Likewise, you are more likely to have a positive attitude toward a specific behavior, like staying home for the holidays, if it is endorsed by a favorite celebrity or another important person in your life.

Taking action

Much of these behaviors or attitude shifts occur subconsciously, but there are things you can do to raise your personal awareness and react in a helpful way:

Research COVID-19 recommendations.Use trusted, verified sources of information, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

Question your attitudes.It is helpful to take a step back to ask yourself why you feel the way you do about a specific topic. Would you continue to feel the same way if an influential person in your life had a different recommendation? What things would need to occur to change your attitude?

Surround yourself with positive influencers.Are your health, happiness and safety important to the people you allow to influence your life? If not, you may want to re-evaluate their priority in your life. Also, examine the elements of your life that you allow to be affected by celebrities. It may be OK to emulate a celebrity by purchasing a perfume or shoes he or she endorses but not follow his or her advice on decisions that affect your health.

Make a plan for social situations. Before leaving the house, make a plan for how you will behave in the situation. For example, you may decide that you will keep your mask on regardless of the situation you encounter. Practice phrases to use if you receive pressure to behave differently, such as: "I don't love wearing a mask, but I do it because it keeps me and you safe. That's my priority right now."

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged many daily routines and traditions. It also presents an opportunity to critically evaluate how you are subconsciously influenced by others. During this time, talk with your health care provider if you have questions about slowing the spread of COVID-19 or other elements of your health and safety. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

This article is written by Judy Fruehbrodt Glenzinski, M.D., a Family Medicine physician at Mayo Clinic Health System in Faribault, Minn.

Life & Style

Timberlake apologizes to Britney Spears and Janet Jackson

NEW YORK (AP)—In a lengthy social media post, Justin Timberlake says that he wants to apologize to Britney Spears and Janet Jackson "because I care for and respect these women and I know I failed."

"I've seen the messages, tags, comments, and concerns and I want to respond. I am deeply sorry for the times in my life where my actions contributed to the problem, where I spoke out of turn, or did not speak up for what was right. I understand that I fell short in these moments and in many others and benefited from a system that condones misogyny and racism," he wrote Friday.

Timberlake's social media post comes a week after the release of The New York Times' documentary "Framing Britney Spears," the FX and Hulu film that takes a historical look at the circumstances that led to Spears' conservatorship in 2008 and highlights the #FreeBritney movement of fans who want to see her released from it and given control of her life. The documentary aired an old interview when Timberlake spoke about sleeping with his former girlfriend and indicated that he ridiculed her by hiring a look-a-like for his "Cry Me a River" music video.

Timberlake

Fans called out Timberlake for contributing to Spears' very public breakdown and controlling the narrative about the end of their relationship.

More backlash hit Timberlake as social media began to recall the wardrobe malfunction with Jackson that caused a national controversy at the 2004 Super Bowl. Some argued that Jackson, as a Black woman, fell victim to a racist and sexist double standard and received harsher treatment than Timberlake, as a white man, did and that he benefited from "white male privilege."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

MTA brings celebrity voices to NYC transit announcements

NEW YORK (AP)—Riders on New York City subways and buses are getting an earful, thanks to some famous hometown voices. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority on Friday launched a campaign that has celebrities including Jerry Seinfeld, Whoopi Goldberg and Awkwafina making the announcements heard at subway stations, on trains and buses. The MTA said the announcements will run for at least a month, and highlight the importance of mask-wearing and other coronavirus pandemic safety measures. "As we start to look beyond the pandemic, we hope this new set of announcements will remind our customers of what makes New York so special," said interim New York City Transit president Sarah Feinberg in a statement. The scripts were written in a collaboration between the MTA and Nico Heller, better known under his social media personality of @newyorknico, and the celebrities were encouraged to put their own takes on them as well, the MTA said.

Singer Ricky Martin joins efforts to build Pulse memorial

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Singer Ricky Martin will be a spokesman for a foundation that is building a memorial and museum to honor the 49 victims who died during a massacre at a gay Florida nightclub nearly five years ago, foundation officials said Thursday. In the unpaid position, Martin will make public service announcements promoting tolerance and also support the foundation by making social media posts, taping video messages and possibly narrating some exhibitions, foundation officials said. "His global platform allows us to share our mission with even more audiences, ensuring Pulse's legacy of love lives on forever," said Earl Crittenden, chair of the onePulse Foundation board, in a statement. Starting on Valentine's Day, the foundation is launching a fundraising campaign with a goal of getting 1 million people to donate $49. The Pulse nightclub near downtown Orlando was attacked by gunman Omar Mateen in June 2016. He pledged allegiance to the Islamic State during a three-hour standoff at the nightclub before he was killed in a shootout with police.

Fire destroys part of Paul Newman's camp for ill children

A fire on Friday evening destroyed a large section of Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for seriously ill children in Connecticut.

Jimmy Canton, the chief executive of the camp in Ashford, said it appears no one was injured in the blaze, which was reported to fire officials through an automatic fire alarm just before 5 p.m. He said buildings housing the camp's store and arts and crafts, woodshop and cooking programs were destroyed.

"Although the cause of the fire is unknown at this time, what is known is that The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp is a community devoted to hope and healing," Canton said in a statement. "We will get through this in the way that we always have and always will—as a family."

Tom Borgman, the deputy chief of the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, said the fire destroyed two buildings, including a large structure that was made to look like the center of an old western town. Different sections of the wood-frame building were constructed to look like separate buildings, housing different programs, he said.

He said at least six other local departments assisted in putting out the fire.

Ashley Judd describes how she 'nearly lost' her leg in Congo

NEW YORK (AP)—Ashley Judd has recounted a painful ordeal she believes almost cost her leg after tripping in a Congolese rainforest and having to be evacuated by motorbike.

Judd

In one of two Instagram Live videos hosted Friday by New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, the actor said she was stuck on the ground for five hours with a "badly misshapen leg," biting a stick because of pain, and "howling like a wild animal."

Judd was injured when she and researchers were up early in a rainforest looking for bonobos when she tripped over a log and the fall shattered her tibia. She was carried out the rainforest in a hammock and back to camp.

Then she was evacuated by motorbike, with a driver steering and another man "holding the top part of my shattered tibia together." That trip lasted six hours.

She described it as a "catastrophic accident" and added that she "nearly lost my leg." She conducted the interview from a hospital bed in South Africa and revealed that if she wasn't a famous actor, she thinks she might have lost her leg and her life during the 55-hour ordeal.

Attorneys spar over powers held by Britney Spears' father

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Attorneys for Britney Spears and her father sparred Thursday over how he should share power with a financial company newly appointed as his partner in the conservatorship that controls her money.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny overruled an objection of Jamie Spears' attorney, Vivian Lee Thoreen, who argued that he should not yield previously granted rights and powers while working with his new co-conservator, The Bessemer Trust.

Thoreen had argued that the proposed order Britney Spears' court-appointed attorney Samuel Ingham III drafted to appoint the new co-conservator was "unclear and ambiguous by design" as he seeks to take authority away from Jamie Spears. Others of her objections to the order were sustained.

In a statement to The Associated Press after the hearing, Thoreen said "the rulings show the court's confidence in our client Jamie Spears and Bessemer Trust to manage the conservatorship of Ms. Spears estate together," and said Jamie Spears "looks forward to working with Bessemer ... in the best interests of his daughter."

Wife resists man's efforts to improve her lifestyle

DEAR ABBY: I met my wife when we were very young and into partying. We're now middle-aged and heading in different directions.

I focus on physical and mental well-being. I work out daily, eat healthy and maintain a positive attitude. She spends her free time lying around, drinking, smoking and constantly exposing herself to negativity through the internet. She's now on medication for depression and anxiety.

My attempts at discussion are mostly met with anger and defensiveness or are dismissed as "a bad time to talk." I feel we have reached a crossroads in our health. I want her to be as fit and healthy as possible so we can enjoy our golden years together. How do I get her to join me in a healthier lifestyle before it's too late?

WILLING IN WASHINGTON

DEAR WILLING: Your wife may have reached a fork in the road of her life. If your description is accurate, you are living with a woman who is depressed, angry, defensive, anxious and self-destructive.

A way to get her to join you in a healthier lifestyle would be to convince her that her own path to wellness will begin with consulting a mental health professional before it is too late and the damage she is doing to herself becomes irreversible. When you do, make sure she knows you are saying it because you love her and want to enjoy a long and happy life with her—something that is clearly not happening for her right now. If she still refuses, then continue doing what you're doing, recognizing you cannot save someone who refuses to help herself.

DEAR ABBY: My best friend is retired and alone, as am I. She recently moved next door so we can help each other if needed.

Since COVID, we feel safe seeing each other because we never go out in public places and all our shopping is done with delivery or curbside pickup. She doesn't like to cook, but I love to, so most evenings she's invited to dinner. She comes over about four times a week and usually takes home the leftovers for the other nights.

What bothers me is I usually eat dinner at the same time, and I remind her of it each time I invite her, yet she's invariably late. At first it was just a minute or two, but it's getting later and later. Tonight I waited 20 minutes for her.

I time my dishes to the minute, and I like my food hot and not overcooked. I don't want to make a big deal out of this, but I'm becoming increasingly irritated. Any suggestions on how I can get the message across without jeopardizing our friendship?

FRESH MEALS IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

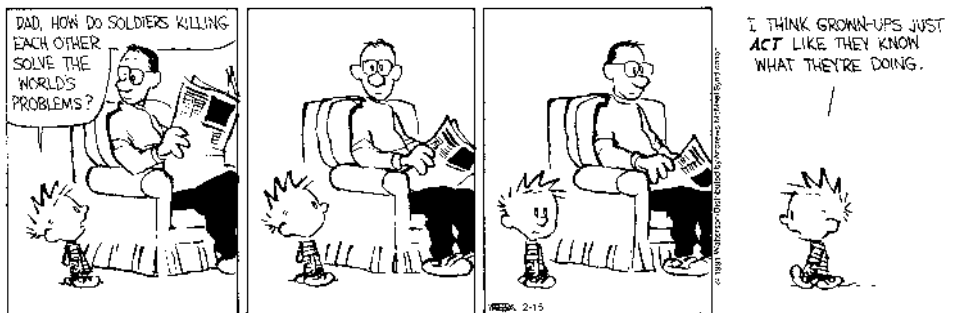
DEAR FRESH: Your friend may be disorganized or just plain thoughtless. The next time you invite her, tell her that because you like your dinner hot -- and not overcooked -- you will start eating at the appointed time and no longer continue to wait for her. You don't have to be mean about it, just firm, and then follow through.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

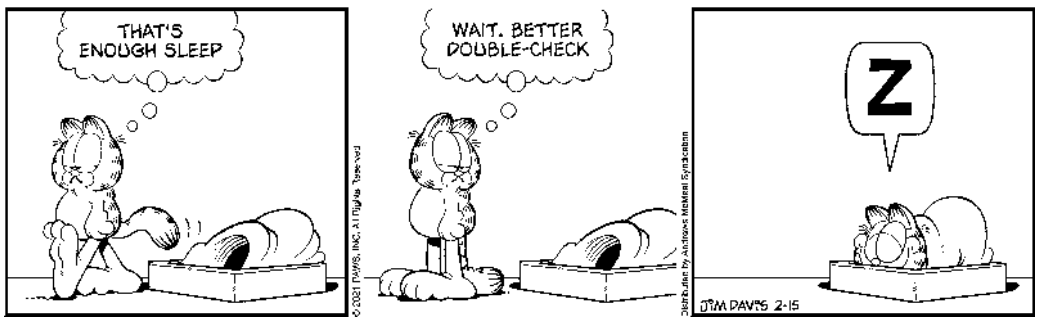
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


DAD, HOW DO SOLDIERS KILLING EACH OTHER SOLVE THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS?
I THINK GROWN-UPS JUST ACT LIKE THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WHAT'S THE PLAN TODAY, DADDY-O?
IT'S A RARE WEEK, HEP CAT.
NO FREELANCE JOBS!
UH-OH.
NO, IT'S GOOD! I'M GOING TO SPEND THE WEEK "GATHERING INSPIRATION."
SO, BINGEING SHOWS AND SNACKS ON THE COUCH?
AGAIN. WE CALL IT "GATHERING INSPIRATION".
2-15

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

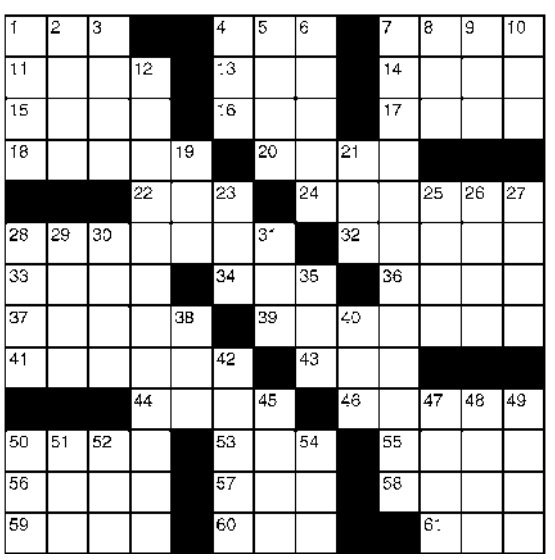
ACROSS
1 Here, in Dijon
4 Sturdy tree
7 Ogler's look
11 Calico's call
13 Shapiro of NPR
14 Pet food brand
15 Utah ski resort
16 Distant
17 Crazy
18 Purse fastener
20 Pear choice
22 Chapeau
24 Bluish-purple
28 Where earth meets sky
32 Feather in one's cap
33 Persia, today
34 Sched. placeholder
36 Hammer target
37 Roo's mother
39 Use a calculator
41 Upper crust
43 Three, in Rome
44 Sea predator
46 Salon sounds
50 Author Uris
53 Ms. Gardner
55 March Madness gp.
56 Eager
57 "Berlin Game" author Deighton
58 Egg part
59 Body powder
60 Parched
61 Formerly known as

DOWN
1 Apple desktop
2 Prison room
3 Greek vowel
4 Klutz
5 Spirited horse
6 Russian ballet company
7 Coin first minted in 1909
8 — Claire, Wis.
9 911 responder
10 Web feed inits.
12 Capital on the Potomac
19 La —, Bolivia
21 Use a straw
23 Nanny's charge
25 Maui meal
26 Send forth
27 Prefix with conference
28 Scouting outing
29 Exam format
30 Hindu royal
31 "This Is Us" network
35 Speck
38 — Lingus
40 Doubtfire or Dalloway
42 Burn with steam
45 Say it's so
47 PC picture
48 Ale variety
49 Rice wine
50 Long. crosser
51 Actress Longoria
52 Texas tea
54 Whatever

Solution time: 26 mins.

G	A	S	P	S		O	A	T		C	A	B
A	V	I	A	N		C	R	O		A	L	A
S	A	D	I	E		T	E	M	P	J	O	B
		E	R	A	S	E	S		R	U	S	E
T	A	J		D	E	T		Y	E	N	T	L
A	R	O	N		E	S	T	E	S			
I	M	B	U	S	Y		E	N	T	R	E	E
			D	R	A	B	S		C	U	S	T
B	U	E	N	O		O	T	T		S	P	A
A	I	A	I		J	O	S	F	P	H		
D	E	S	K	J	O	B		S	A	J	A	K
L	E	E		A	N	O		S	T	O	N	E
Y	S	L		B	I	O		A	S	B	I	G

Last Friday's Answer 02/15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Amber Riley, 35; Matt Groening, 67; Melissa Manchester, 70; Jane Seymour, 70.

Happy Birthday: Look at the possibilities; focus on the ones that make the most sense. How you make decisions and pursue offers will determine your success. Refuse to let others make decisions for you or copy what others are doing because you aren't confident enough to pursue your goals. Trust and believe in yourself. Good things will come to pass. Your numbers are 6, 17, 21, 24, 28, 30, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Trust in your ability to get things done quickly and efficiently. Working alone, presenting what you have to offer, and establishing yourself in a new and exciting set of circumstances look promising. A good impression will lead to an exceptional offer. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Sit tight; if you try to implement a change, you will face opposition. Look for a unique way to use your skills without drawing attention to yourself or your plans. You'll do your best not to share your intentions until you have mastered your skills. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Own the spotlight and reap the rewards. Conduct business with confidence. There is nothing you cannot accomplish if you set your sights on your target and pursue your dreams with relentless courage. Ask, and you shall receive. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't be afraid to do things differently. Your uniqueness will shine through when it comes to professional advancement. Look for a financial opportunity you can handle all by yourself. Joint ventures will face difficulties. Distance yourself from presumptuous individuals. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take a moment and observe. What you discover will lead to better decisions regarding partnerships. Scrutinize an unexpected opportunity before you decide to take part. You are better off proceeding down a path you are familiar with. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* A change is necessary. Hanging on to something that no longer brings you joy or limits your options is futile. Embrace what life has to offer and the changes required to get you where you want to go. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Sign up for something you find intriguing, it will broaden your horizons and encourage you to take on something new and exciting. Do your research, and avoid making purchases that aren't necessary. A partnership will need balance and equality. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Stick close to home. Look for innovative ways to improve your surroundings and your relationships with those close to you. Listen, but don't follow a friend or neighbor heading in a direction that puts your finances or health at risk. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Trust and believe in yourself and your ability to get things done. Distance yourself from anyone who pressures you by using false claims. Engage in conversations with someone who shares your beliefs, feelings and dreams. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take on and do only what you know you can handle. An emotional incident will lead to problems with a friend, relative or peer if empty promises and money are involved. Choose to act alone, and finish what you start. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Follow your heart, use your skills benevolently and do the best job possible. Don't let a change at home interfere with your ideas. Focus on progress and financial stability. Personal gain and romance look promising. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Let your instincts lead the way. The actions you take will set the pace and help you reach your destination without interference. Take care of matters, and bring about the changes that will help you remain in charge. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are demonstrative, playful and ambitious. You are astute and aggressive.

1 star: *Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes.* **2 stars:** *You can accomplish, but don't rely on others.* **3 stars:** *Focus and you'll reach your goals.* **4 stars:** *Aim high; start new projects.* **5 stars:** *Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1	9				7	6		4
6		3		8			7	
	7		6					9
		5	3					2
	8						4	
4					2	5		
9					3		5	
	4			7		8		6
8		2	1				9	3

Difficulty Level ★ 2/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

1	6	2	9	4	7	8	5	3
4	3	7	8	5	1	6	9	2
9	8	5	6	2	3	4	1	7
8	9	1	4	7	2	5	3	6
5	2	3	1	8	6	7	4	9
6	7	4	5	3	9	2	8	1
3	4	6	7	1	5	9	2	8
2	5	9	3	6	8	1	7	4
7	1	8	2	9	4	3	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE LAUNDRY NEVER ENDS Solution: 7 letters

S	S	T	E	E	H	S	E	V	O	L	G	B	U	T
T	R	P	I	L	S	R	O	L	O	C	H	A	N	G
N	L	E	O	J	E	R	S	E	Y	S	U	I	T	A
A	E	O	S	T	R	O	E	C	E	E	L	F	R	R
P	W	T	N	U	F	O	L	W	E	E	K	L	Y	M
D	O	E	A	T	O	E	B	R	R	B	C	A	R	E
I	T	K	E	A	N	R	F	U	L	D	R	A	I	N
P	N	N	L	N	I	W	T	O	L	C	N	S	S	T
A	E	A	C	K	S	A	U	I	I	K	R	T	E	L
R	G	L	J	K	R	S	M	R	G	I	Y	R	L	E
S	R	B	I	E	E	H	B	S	N	H	W	O	K	N
H	E	R	P	F	A	A	L	S	K	E	T	H	N	N
I	T	M	O	G	F	N	E	P	A	C	K	S	I	A
R	E	L	D	R	E	S	S	R	E	W	O	P	R	L
T	D	R	Y	E	R	E	T	A	E	W	S	S	W	F

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Blanket, Blouse, Bulky, Care, Clean, Color, Cycle, Detergent, Drain, Dress, Dryer, Fabric, Flannel, Fleece, Fold, Free, Fresh, Garment, Gloves, Hang, Jeans, Jersey, Pack, Pants, Power, Rapid, Rinse, Sheets, Shirt, Shorts, Skirt, Socks, Softener, Suit, Sweater, Tank, Temperature, Tights, Tops, Towel, Trousers, Tub, Tumble, Wash, Wear, Weekly, Wool, Wrinkles

Last Friday's Answer: Walls

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Durant returns to help Nets rout Warriors

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Kevin Durant offered hugs and handshakes all around, then left a winner in his reunion with the Warriors.

Durant did a bit of everything in his first trip back to the Bay Area to play the team he helped capture two championships over three years, scoring 20 points in the Brooklyn Nets' 134-117 victory against Golden State on Saturday night.

"My time here at Golden State was so much fun," Durant said. "It was such a big learning experience, especially learning the game of basketball, a different philosophy. I'm going to take that with me for the rest of my life."

The NBA Finals MVP during both title runs, Durant missed his initial three shots before making a 3-pointer at the 5:49 mark of the first quarter and finished 8 for 19 from the floor and 1 of 6 on 3s.

Pal Stephen Curry didn't have his best stroke either, going 10 of 17 for 27 points and 2 for 9 from deep as cold-shooting Golden State lost its third straight to the Nets and missed a chance at its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Golden State paid video tribute with "Welcome back KD!" during a first-quarter timeout and plans to so again during his next visit to Chase Center when fans have returned.

"This is something that is such a no-brainer. When Kevin came here and gave us three years of just incredible basketball the least we could do is welcome him back with open arms," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "... A guy that gave everything to us for three years then left with a devastating injury. There should be a lot of love, he did so much for us."

The Nets had lost three of four but welcomed back Durant after he missed the past three games under COVID-19 quarantine protocols.

The Warriors saw ex-Houston nemesis James Harden in a Nets uniform for the first time, and he dished out 16 assists to go with 19 points, including five 3s, and eight rebounds. Kyrie Irving scored 23 points as Brooklyn snapped a seven-game losing streak on the Warriors' home floor in its first visit to Chase Center.

"The tribute video was cool. I think about those moments daily. Every single moment that I've had in this league I think about it and try to analyze it and get better from it," Durant said.

Durant walked onto the court for pregame warmups and greeted all his friends. He and Curry were concentrating on their warmup routines until the two-time MVP stopped to say hello as Durant stretched on his back at midcourt.

"I think it does mean something to him but he hasn't showed it, we haven't talked about it," said Nets coach Steve Nash, who worked closely with Durant during his Bay Area stint as a Warriors player development consultant. "If there's ever a comeback game that is less than what it may have been in the normal situation, it's this one."

Durant returned from missing last season following surgery for a torn right Achilles tendon he hurt in Game 5 of the 2019 NBA Finals with the Warriors.

It's the same injury Klay Thompson is sidelined with now—and Durant has been in regular touch with Thompson, who watched from the sideline Saturday.

"Can't wait to see him back out there," Durant said.

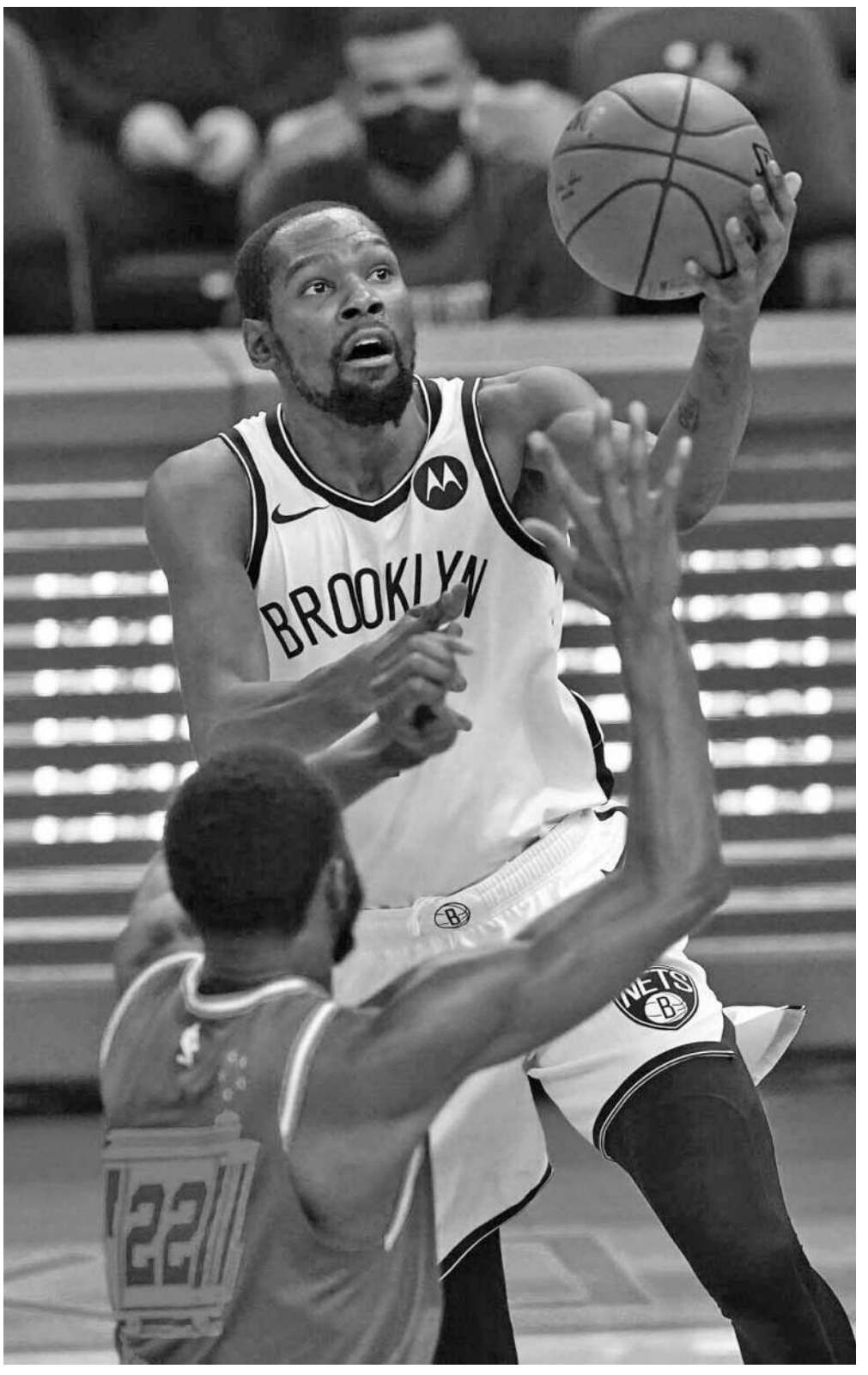
The Warriors shot 4 for 20 on 3-pointers in the first half, 1 of 7 by Curry, and trailed 66-51 at the break.

Curry struggled by his standards coming off a 40-point performance two nights earlier against Orlando in which he made 10 3-pointers.

The Warriors lost 125-99 at Brooklyn to open the season Dec. 22, but "we're a totally different team," Kent Bazemore said.

So were the new-look Nets.

"James Harden's kind of a big deal," Kerr said.



AP

Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant, top, shoots asGolden State Warriors forward Andrew Wiggins defends during the first half of an NBA game in San Francisco, Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021.

Jazz 112, Heat 94

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 26 points to help Utah beat Miami for its seventh consecutive victory.

Bojan Bogdanovic added 19 points, and Rudy Gobert had 16 points, 12 rebounds and three blocks for the Jazz. Georges Niang chipped in 14 points and a career-high five assists.

NBA-leading Utah improved to 22-5. It has won 18 of 19 games since a 4-4 start.

Kendrick Nunn scored 20 points for Miami. Jimmy Butler added 15 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Suns 120, 76ers 111

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 36 points, Chris Paul added 18 points and 10 assists and the Suns beat Philadelphia for their fifth straight victory.

The Suns have won eight of their past nine games and improved to 16-9. They shot 61% and got a big game from their bench, especially from Dario Saric. He scored 15 points in his first game back after missing 10 straight.

Joel Embiid had 35 points on 12-of-23 shooting for the 76ers. They have lost two in a row but still hold the top spot in the Eastern Conference at 18-9. Ben Simmons and Tobias Harris each added 18 points.

Knicks 121 Rockets 99

In New York, Julius Randle and rookie Immanuel Quickley each scored 22 points and the Knicks sent Houston to a season-high fifth straight loss.

Derrick Rose added 16 points for New York. The Knicks, who had no problem in their first game after losing starting center Mitchell Robinson to a broken right hand Friday night in a victory at Washington.

John Wall scored 26 points, and Eric Gordon had 24 for Houston.

Pacers 125, Hawks 113

In Atlanta, Doug McDermott scored 26 points, Myles Turner had 19 points and 10 rebounds and beat Atlanta for its second straight victory.

Indiana scored 41 points in the final period and used a 27-7 run to take control. quarter. Aaron Holiday was the spark with the outcome on the line, scoring 13 of his 18 points in the fourth.

Clint Capela had 24 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta. Trae Young had 15 points and 14 assists but didn't attempt a 3-pointer for just the second time in his career. The Hawks have lost six of seven.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic

	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	18	9	.667	0.0
Brooklyn	16	12	.571	2.5
Boston	13	12	.520	4.0
New York	13	15	.464	5.5
Toronto	12	14	.462	5.5

Central

Milwaukee	16	10	.615	0.0
Indiana	14	13	.519	2.5
Chicago	10	15	.400	5.5
Cleveland	10	17	.370	6.5
Detroit	7	19	.269	9.0

Southeast

Charlotte	13	14	.481	0.0
Miami	11	15	.423	1.5
Atlanta	11	15	.423	1.5
Orlando	10	17	.370	3.0
Washington	6	17	.261	5.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific

LA Lakers	21	6	.778	0.0
LA Clippers	19	8	.704	2.0
Phoenix	16	9	.640	4.0
Golden State	14	13	.519	7.0
Sacramento	12	13	.480	8.0

Southwest

San Antonio	15	11	.577	0.0
Dallas	13	14	.481	2.5
Memphis	10	11	.476	2.5
New Orleans	11	14	.440	3.5
Houston	11	15	.423	4.0

Northwest

Utah	22	5	.815	0.0
Portland	15	10	.600	6.0
Denver	14	11	.560	7.0
Oklahoma City	10	15	.400	11.0
Minnesota	6	20	.231	15.5

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron warned for flopping

NEW YORK (AP) — LeBron James was warned Saturday for violating the NBA's anti-flopping rule after a play in which the superstar appeared to fall dramatically with little or no contact.

The league also warned teammate Kyle Kuzma for flopping in the same game, the Los Angeles Lakers' 115-105 victory over Memphis on Friday.

James was between two Memphis players when teammate Anthony Davis took a shot from the other side of the court. James fell backward and threw his arms into the air, and a foul was called as the Grizzles players looked on in frustration.

Kuzma was defending against Dillon Brooks when he spun all the way around and tumbled across the baseline.

Flopping penalties have been infrequent in recent years after the league began cracking down on the act of trying to fool referees into calling fouls by initiating penalties in the 2012-13 season. After a first-time warning, a player is fined $5,000 fine for a second offense.

Meanwhile, Tyler Herro was cleared Friday to resume basketball activities with the Miami Heat after missing one game while dealing with the NBA's health and safety coronavirus protocols.

The second-year guard was flagged after a test result Thursday, then cleared after returning subsequent negative tests. Herro was not permitted to play in Miami's win over Houston on Thursday night while the matter was sorted out. He then was able to join the team for its flight to Salt Lake City after the game.

Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said he learned Herro would not be available for Thursday's game "17 seconds before I was going to speak to the team" pregame. Max Strus got the bulk of what would have been Herro's minutes, scoring a career-high 21 points and helping Miami beat the Rockets 101-94.

Herro was tested again Friday morning, part of the usual player routine this season. The Heat announced a few hours later he's no longer dealing with the protocols.

Miami has had 10 of its 17 players miss at least one game this season for virus-related reasons. Jimmy Butler missed a team-high 10 games.

Osaka, Serena survive scare to reach quarters

MELBOURNE—Naomi Osaka saved two match points as she battled back from the brink to reach the quarter-finals of the Australian Open with a 4-6 6-4 7-5 victory over in-form Garbine Muguruza on Sunday.

The Japanese third seed was chasing the match from the start on Rod Laver Arena and looked defeat square in the face in the third set when the Spanish 14th seed had two opportunities to win the match with a break of serve.

Osaka saved both match points—the first with an ace—to turn the tide in the contest decisively and Muguruza exited the tournament a couple of games later after failing to win a point in her final service.

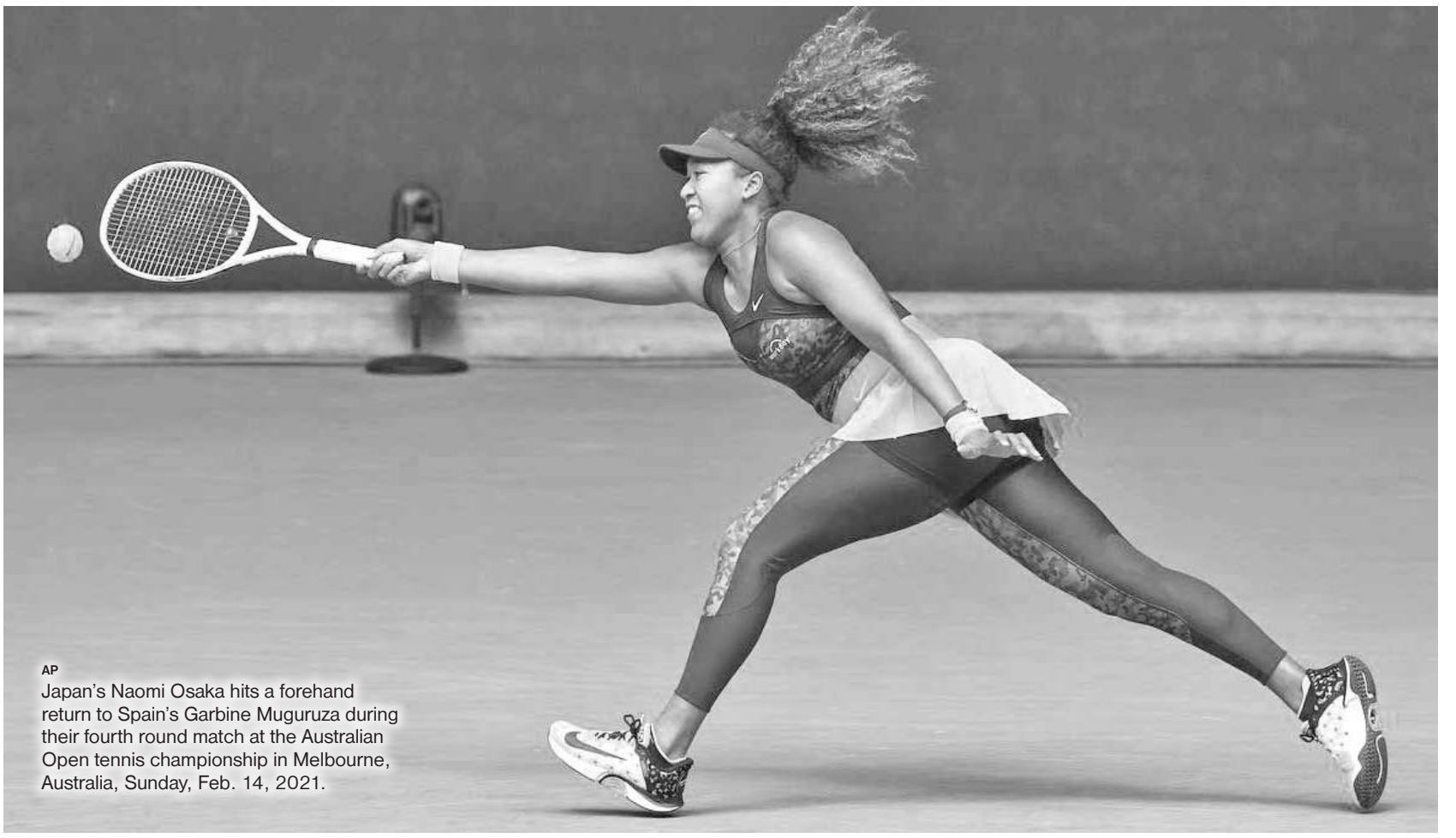
Fans remained absent from Melbourne Park for a second day because of the state of Victoria's coronavirus lockdown and Osaka's victory was greeted with taped applause piped into the stadium.

"I'm tired right now, that was tough," said Osaka, who mixed 40 winners with 36 unforced errors over the contest. "Today I feel like I was intimidated, she is playing well. I had to go within myself, I couldn't play short balls to her because she'd put them away."

Next up for Osaka is an all-Asian quarter-final against unorthodox 35-year-old Hsieh Su-wei of Taiwan, who will be playing in the last eight of a Grand Slam for the first time.

"I'm not looking forward to it, every time we have played it's three sets," Osaka added. "It's fun when I'm not really angry. When I play her I just have to expect everything."

Although Osaka had never played Muguruza before, she had perhaps a better idea of what to expect from the former French Open and Wimbledon champion.



AP
Japan's Naomi Osaka hits a forehand return to Spain's Garbine Muguruza during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021.

Muguruza, a finalist here last year, had conceded only 10 games in reaching the fourth round and continued that rich vein of form into Sunday's match.

Serving solidly and pouncing on anything short of perfect that flew off Osaka's racket, she grabbed what looked to be a crucial break of serve for 5-3 in the third set by steering a lovely backhand winner down the line.

Muguruza rued her missed opportunity but said she was happy overall with the start to her season.

"It's never a good feeling losing a match that you feel you could have changed in one second," the 27-year-old said. "But I left the court with a good feeling, very good feeling about this tournament in general."

Meanwhile, Serena Williams stormed into the quarter-finals of the Australian Open with a gritty 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka.

The match was a big test for Williams, who was up against one of the few players on the women's tour capable of matching her power from behind the baseline.

"I'm happy to get through that one," Williams said in an on-court interview. "It wasn't easy and I knew it wasn't going to be easy. She was teeing off on every shot. "Even the games that I lost were super close, one shot here and one shot there, and I just felt like, 'Serena you've got this, you've just got to keep going.'"

The players went toe-to-toe in an even first set until Williams pounced late to break Sabalenka for the first time and take a 1-0 lead.

The roles were reversed at the start of the second, however, with Sabalenka breaking Williams in her first two service games.

The American, who is chasing a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title, clawed a break back but was powerless in the face of Sabalenka's onslaught as the seventh seed broke once more for a 4-1 lead before sending the match into a decider.

"I lost the second set but the games were so close so I just tried to stay in there," Williams added.

With the pressure ramped up in the third it was Sabalenka who blinked first, making several errors on serve to hand Williams a 3-1 lead.

The Belarusian broke back and then levelled the set at 4-4 with a hold to love but the pressure finally told with Sabalenka serving to stay in the match trailing 5-4.

Sabalenka double-faulted to give Williams a 15-30 lead and netted a forehand to hand her two match points, conceding the match by sending a forehand long. ***(AP/NBC)***

Injured Djokovic not sure if he can keep playing

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Novak Djokovic said he tore a muscle during a fall in his five-set victory in the Australian Open's third round and might need to pull out of the tournament.

His opponent, American Taylor Fritz, wasn't so sure. He figured Djokovic definitely will be back out there Sunday to continue his pursuit of a ninth championship at Melbourne Park and 18th Grand Slam title overall.

"If he can play like he played in the fifth, I don't see why he wouldn't play," Fritz said. "He'll beat pretty much anyone."

The No. 1-ranked Djokovic seemed to be cruising along with a two-set lead Friday night when his left foot gave out from under him as he tried to change directions and he slipped awkwardly on the white "MELBOURNE" lettering at the back of the blue court. He took a medical timeout for treatment on his side and later was helped more by a trainer. Fritz got back into the match, before Djokovic eventually won 7-6 (1), 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-2.

When it ended, Djokovic puffed his chest, held his arms out wide and bellowed, his voice echoing through an empty and otherwise silent Rod Laver Arena. The match began with spectators present, but they were forced to leave a little past 11:30 p.m.—about an hour before Djokovic wrapped up his win—because a local COVID-19 lockdown began at midnight.

During an on-court interview, he was subdued.

And pessimistic.

"I know it's a tear, definitely, of the muscle. So I don't know if I'll manage to recover from that in less than two days. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know if I'm going to step out onto the court or not," said Djokovic, who is supposed to face 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic with a quarterfinal berth on the line.

"I am just very proud of this achievement tonight," Djokovic said. "Let's see what happens tomorrow."

The only man in the draw with more Grand Slam trophies than Djokovic, No. 2 Rafael Nadal, has been complaining about a bad back since last week. Nadal's bid for his men's-record 21st major title—breaking a tie with Roger Federer—continues Saturday in the third round against Cameron Norrie.

Others in third-round action Saturday include No. 4 Daniil Medvedev, No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 7 Andrey Rublev, No. 9 Matteo Berrettini and the last American man in the tournament, unseeded McKenzie McDonald.

In addition to Djokovic-Raonic, the fourth-round matchups slated for Sunday are No. 3 Dominic Thiem vs. No. 18 Grigor Dimitrov, No. 6 Alexander Zverev vs. No. 23 Dusan Lajovic, and No. 20 Felix Auger-Aliassime vs. Aslan Karatsev, a Russian qualifier who is ranked 114th and making his Grand Slam debut.

On Friday, Djokovic's match was halted for about 10 minutes while the crowd was cleared out, which bothered Fritz.

"I mean, to be honest—like, completely honest—it's absolutely ridiculous that at a Grand Slam match, we're asked to leave the court for 10 minutes in the middle of the match," said Fritz, a 23-year-old from California who was seeded 27th. "That shouldn't be a thing at a Grand Slam. ... We shouldn't have played tonight if we weren't going to finish the match on time."

No fans will be allowed at the tournament for at least five days.

Meanwhile, Nadal overcame some stiff early resistance from Britain's Cameron Norrie before easing into the fourth round with a 7-5 6-2 7-5 victory on Saturday.

After being heckled by a loud-mouthed fan in his previous round win against Michael Mmoh, Nadal enjoyed an incident-free evening in an empty Rod Laver Arena to reach the round of 16 at a Grand Slam for the 49th time in his career.

The 34-year-old Nadal, bidding to claim a record 21st Grand Slam title, will face Italian Fabio Fognini next.

"In a way, it's unfortunate for the crowd that we didn't finish the match with them seeing the end. They were enjoying it, certainly," said Djokovic, the champion in Australia each of the past two years. "On the other hand, you know, for me regardless of the crowd in the stands or not, I was just trying to focus on what's going on with an injury and just praying and hoping that somehow it would get better."

After his movement and usually strong returns were clearly hampered in the third and fourth sets, Djokovic began to assert himself more in the fifth.

Things swung suddenly back in his favor with a break to 4-2.

"Looked like he was struggling in the third and the fourth, and he didn't really look like he was struggling in the fifth," Fritz said. "He looked fine in the fifth. Let's be honest."

This setback dropped Fritz's career record in third-round matches at Grand Slam tournaments to 0-6.

"I make (the) third round literally every single Slam. I just want to make it to the fourth round," Fritz said. "Like, it's so tough. I fought so hard and wanted it so bad, and it's just really tough to go out like that."

Wilson's issues could alter 49ers, NFC West's future

SEATTLE—The unthinkable won't happen this offseason.

Yes, teams reportedly have checked in with the Seattle Seahawks about the availability of quarterback Russell Wilson, hoping that general manager John Schneider might give them an opening. He has not, and Wilson almost certainly will return under center for the Seahawks next season.

But Wilson's reported issues with the Seahawks are important to note. CBS Sports' Jason La Canfora reported that Wilson's camp is upset with the Seahawks' inability to protect him. Wilson has been sacked 394 times in his career, the most in NFL history. Of course, some of that falls on Wilson, whose improvisational play lends itself to him holding onto the ball more and taking more hits and sacks.

Wilson went on "The Dan Patrick Show" on Tuesday and, unintentionally or not, added fuel to the possibility that he could be leaving the Pacific Northwest.

"I'm not sure if I'm available or not, that's a Seahawks question," Wilson told Patrick when asked if he was on the trade market. "I think the reality of professional sports is that things happen, things change. I'm not sure how long I'll play in Seattle, Hopefully, it'll be forever but things change along the way and I think that you focus on what you can control and try to be the best version of yourself and ultimately try to win championships. That's why I play this game."

AP
Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson (3) scrambles away from Los Angeles Rams outside linebacker Leonard Floyd during the second half of an NFL wild-card playoff game, Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021, in Seattle.

"Hopefully" is doing a lot of work in that answer for Wilson. The 32-year-old has been open about his desire to be a Seahawk for life, but he also wants to be put in the best situation to win a championship. Despite Wilson's success, the Seahawks haven't advanced past the divisional round of the playoffs since 2014, Wilson's third season in the NFL.

If Wilson and the Seahawks do have philosophical differences on how to run the offense and the players to put around him, that could ultimately alter the future landscape of the NFC West and, potentially, the 49ers' title window.

Entering the offseason, the 49ers are slated to have the worst quarterback in the division following the Los Angeles Rams' trade to acquire Matthew Stafford. They are looking at a division that should see them face Wilson, 32, for at least five-to-10 more years, Kyler Murray for at least the next three and almost certainly more and Stafford for the next two and potentially beyond if he and the Rams find success.

That divisional picture, not to mention the other Green Bay Packers and Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers, make for a treacherous road back to the Super Bowl for the 49ers.

It's easier to view championship windows for bigger than they actually are, and they can close in the blink of an eye. Twelve months ago, the 49ers were 10 minutes away from a title. They walked off the field in Miami believing they'd be back with almost the same cast this season.

Injuries derailed that pursuit, and now the 49ers have a number of difficult roster decisions they have to ace in order to keep that window from inching shut. They have to find a way to rebuild their secondary. Safety Jimmie Ward will be back but Richard Sherman, Jason Verrett, K'Waun Williams, Jaquiski Tartt and Ahkello Witherspoon all are set to be unrestricted free agents. Emmanuel Moseley will be a restricted free agent.

The 49ers' vaunted defensive front from 2019 no longer has DeForest Buckner, an essential piece, after he was traded to the Indianapolis Colts. Dee Ford's battle with neck and back injuries make him an unreliable edge partner for Nick Bosa. The 49ers have to find a way to bolster their defensive line and get back to pressuring the quarterback as they did in 2019.

Jimmy Garoppolo likely will return as the starting quarterback, but questions about his long-term viability as a Super Bowl quarterback remain.

Thanks to a changing roster and loaded NFC West, the 49ers' title window no longer is as open as it appeared a year ago.

That could change if the Seahawks and Wilson can't squash whatever differences they now appear to have.

To Wilson, it's clearly important that he give the same input on roster decisions that are allowed to other elite quarterbacks with his resume.

"Not as much," Wilson told Patrick when asked if he was involved in personnel decisions. "I think it helps to be involved more. I think that dialogue should happen more often in my opinion."

LIFE

From Page 20

our students who are excited to come out and compete," Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred B. Ada.

"It's very heartwarming to see our interscholastic sports program coming back to life," Ada added.

Before starting the canoe season, PSS first held the 2020-2021 PSS/Northern Marianas Athletics All Schools Cross Country Series in November and December with students in the elementary, middle school and high school both in public and private competing in various races at the CPA Airport Field. Then last month, the 2020-2021 PSS Interscholastic 4v4 Beach Volleyball League kicked off at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, featuring high school students (boys and girls) with both private and public schools fielding multiple teams in the competition. The beach volleyball league has completed its preliminary matches and will begin the playoff round this Friday (Feb. 19) for the girls division and next Friday (Feb. 26) for the boys field. Tinian and Rota teams are invited to join the double-elimination playoffs.

Meanwhile, last weekend's canoe races served as warm-ups for the participating teams as no points were awarded in the kick-off event. Points will be at stake in the sprints races on Feb. 20, March 6, and March 13 (double points/championship round) and in the long distance event set for Feb. 27.

Northern Marianas National Paddle Sports Federation is assisting PSS in holding the canoe race series, which NMPSF president Justin Andrew did not expect to go ahead this season due to the pandemic.

"But thankfully we are able to play and go back to our playground. It's good to see our paddlers back in the water. Thanks to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force for keeping us safe and allowing us to hold this event and to the community for following safety protocols," Andrew said.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Marianas High School students compete in the 500m event in last Saturday's kick-off leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series at Kilili Beach.

SEEDED

From Page 20

and Eamon Tang and David Kwon, 7-6, 6-3.

The Last 8 matches in the mixed-up doubles, which determined the pairings of players via random draws, will be played today with Kang and Chung taking on Shimizu and Simbulan and Andy and Si Woo battling Min Seoung and Sean for two of the four semis berths in the division. In the fight for the two other semis tickets, it will be Bishop Jimenez and Wataru against Simon and Ryu and Dong Min and Wang versus Yu and Boyer.

Meanwhile, the men's singles event will also have its quarterfinals today. No. 1 seed Jim Min Woo will take on Andy Kim, who won over Murphy in the opener last weekend, 6-1, 7-5. No. 4 seed Ryu defeated Quintin Ramsey, 6-2, 6-1, to advance against Jun Wang, who ousted Gerald Boyer, 6-0, 6-2, while No. 2 seed Sean Lee will duel Vincent Tudela—a victor over Jones via walkover. David Kwon took the last quarterfinals berth in the division following a 3-6, 6-2, 10-1 win against Isaac Heo and the former will be battling No. 3 seed Colin Ramsey.

Besides the men's singles and mixed-up doubles, the White Coconut Classic also featured competitions in the women's singles, men's over 40 singles, co-ed U10 singles, boys and girls U12 and U14 singles, and boys U16 singles. Results of the other divisions will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Tuesday and Wednesday editions.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Eliza Culp hits the ball during her co-ed U12 singles match against Jin Ho Park.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Min Seoung Kim returns to Dev Bachani during their boys U16 singles game in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Saturday at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

Durant returns to help Nets rout Warriors

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Osaka, Serena survive scare to reach quarters

PAGE 18

Seeded players march on

ROMMEL BUENAFLOR
Bishop Ryan Jimenez, seen here returning a shot to John Bradley during the men's over 40 singles event at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan tennis courts last Saturday, is also playing in the mixed-up doubles with Wataru Kadokura and they are in the quarterfinals of the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The crowded mixed-up doubles event in the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic is down to the Last 8 and will be a battle of seeded players.

No. 1 seed Daniel Kang and Irin Chung and No. 2 Dong Min Lee and Hoo Wang led the quarterfinals cast in the 36-pair field as they and six other teams lived up to expectations following their victories over the weekend at the American Memorial Park and Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan tennis courts.

Kang and Chung reached the quarterfinal round after eliminating Dev Bachani and Grace Choi, 6-3, 7-6 (1), during their match at the top half of the draw last Saturday. Also playing at the upper half of the draw and moving to the next round were No. 5 seed Cody Shimizu and Edwin Simbulan, No. 12 Si Woo Lee and Andy Kim, and No. 6 Min Seoung Kim and Sean Lee.

Shimizu and Simbulan defeated Stephen Yeom and Eric Abragan, 6-4, 7-5, and No. 11 Lina Tsukagoshi and Hye Jin Elliot, 2-6, 6-4, 10-7, to advance to the quarterfinals. Andy Kim and Si Woo Lee also earned a pair of wins to stay in contention, prevailing against Peter Loken and Eliza Culp, 6-2, 6-3, and upsetting No. 4 seed Raffy Jones and Savita Sikkel, 6-3, 6-2. The duo of Min Seoung Kim and Sean Lee was the third team at the top half of the draw to notch twin wins for a seat to the quarterfinals, as the pair first downed Mat Murphy and Anna Kwon, 6-3, 6-4, and then outclassed Quintin Ramsey and Ji Hun Park, 6-2, 6-3.

At the lower half of the draw, joining Dong Min Lee and Wang in the quarterfinals were No. 7 seed Bishop Ryan Jimenez and Wataru Kadokura, No. 3. Simon Tang and Sam Ryu, and No. 8 Gerald Boyer and June Yu.

Bishop Jimenez and Kadokura eked out a 7-5, 3-6, 10-4 win over Paul Jang and Eun Ho Park and then took only two sets to eliminate Ryan Choi and Colin Ramsey, 6-4, 7-6, to reach the Last 8. Dong Min and Wang advanced following a 7-5, 6-2 triumph over Ji Min Woo and Jin Ho Park and a 7-6 (4), 6-0 win against No. 10 Nason Wessel and Ami Tsukagoshi. Simon Tang and Ryu also took the short route to the quarterfinals after ousting Yutaka Kadokura and John Bradley, 7-6, 6-1, and Henry Yeom and Serin Chung, 6-4, 6-3. Yu and Boyer completed the quarterfinals cast after beating Whit Altizer and Hannah Chae, 6-3, 6-1,

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Interscholastic program 'coming back to life'

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School paddlers steer their canoe as they make a turn at Kilili Beach during last Saturday's kick-off leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series.

Saipan Southern High School paddlers exchange high-fives with their coaches. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

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REPORTER

The 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series kicked off last weekend at Kilili Beach Park, making the event the third competition hosted under the PSS Student Support Services Athletic Program.

The opening leg of the canoe race series featured the girls and boys teams of Kagman High School, Marianas High School, and Saipan Southern High School. They raced in the boys, girls, and co-ed 500m and 1,000m preliminaries and finals.

"I am very happy for our students. Mental and physical wellness should go hand in hand so it's really nice to see them do outdoor activities, like sports after missing several events last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I see a lot of energy from

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